MARXIST MISCELLANY

A Collection of Essays

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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

This, our second number, makes its appearance exactly a year after the first, though we had hoped to bring it out much earlier An important cause for the delay is the attempt to maintain a certain level of study and analysis in the essays as well as to provide a certain variety We think that we have attained this objective in this issue as we had in the previous one, judging by the response from the readers

We are anxious to receive more essays which examine in depth and from a Marxist standpoint problems of the political and mass movements We are no less eager to publish theoretical articles dealing with problems of the development and defence of the method and doctrine of Marxism

As in the previous issue the essays are by participants of the mass and political movements who are also devoted to study and realise the value of generalisation We appeal to hundreds of similar persons to come forward and help us by sending us their work for publication

Additionally, we want to very much enlarge our book review section

All essays and comments on essays previously published, as well as on *Marxist Miscellany* as a whole, should be sent to us at the address of the publishers

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The Comintern Congresses and the CPI

G. Adhikari

The sources of information about the Indian delegates which attended the various congresses of the Communist International, from the First to the Seventh, are the following: (1) stenographic records of the congresses published in Moscow in Russian, (2) *International Press Correspondence* (*Inprecor,* English edition) which began publication from November 1921 and continued probably up to 1941; (3) information supplied by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC, CPSU, Moscow, to Chinmohan Sehanavis; (4) other sources, e g recollections of Indian comrades who attended some of the congresses.

Delegates admitted to the congresses were according to the statutes and rules of the CI of two types. delegates with decisive vote and those with consultative vote. In the earlier Russian published records names were given, later only the number attending and sometimes pseudonyms. All the sources listed above have not been thoroughly gone through. For instance, all the volumes of *Inprecor* have not been gone through especially for the Seventh Congress. With these preliminary remarks, I set forth the authentic information so far collected.

FIRST CONGRESS OF THE CI
2-6 March 1919

The source is the book in Russian prepared by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute of CC, RCP(B) *Protocols of the Congresses of the Communist International—First Congress of the Comintern, March 1919*, Edited by E Korotki, B Kun and O Pyatniski, Party Publications, Moscow, 1933

We have in the Central Archives of the Party a microfilm of eight pages of the book It probably contains no list of delegates From the CPI publication *The Communist International* (p 8) we get the information that 'It was attended by delegates from 35 proletarian organisations—communist parties, communist groups, left-socialist parties and groups from Austria, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Hungary, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Soviet Russia, Finland, France, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Sweden, Yugoslavia, the United States, Iran, China, Korea, Turkey and other countries"

So we can safely conclude that no Indian delegates were present—not even anyone from the Indian revolutionaries abroad The Khairy brothers—Jabbar and Sattar, who were the first Indians to visit Moscow after the October Socialist Revolution—reached Moscow in November 1918 and returned to Berlin in about a month's time Mahendra Pratap and his team consisting of Barakatullah, M P B T Acharya, Abdul Rab Peshawari and Ibrahim (the servant of Barakatullah) met Lenin in May 1919, i e after the First Congress

SECOND CONGRESS OF THE CI
19 July to 7 August 1920

The source of information here is similar Russian book prepared by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute of the CC, RCP(B) with the title *Protocols of the Congresses of the Communist International—Second Congress of Comintern, July August 1920*, Edited by O Pyatniski, D Manuilski, V. Knorin, B Kun and M Zorki, Party Publications, Moscow, 1933

We have in the Central Archives of the Party the microfilm of 51 pages of this book which contains references to India. On pages 621 and 622 there is a list of delegates to the congress, with columns for the country and the party they represented. M. N. Roy and Allen (?) are listed as delegates from Mexico, from the Communist Party of Mexico. Abani Mukherji and Acharya are listed as delegates without (decisive) vote from India. In the party column against their names there is a question mark. On page 625 are given the names of the delegates elected to the National and Colonial Commission. It contains the names of Roy and Allen (Mexico) and Allen (British India) (?).

The *Memoirs* of Roy confirms that he had a mandate from the CP of Mexico to attend the Second Congress of the CI as a delegate from Mexico. He does not mention a second delegate nor mentions anything about Evelyn Roy (Allen—?) who accompanied him to Moscow in the spring of 1920. Roy mentions that Abani was a delegate but does not mention Acharya.

According to the information obtained by Chinmohan Sehanavis from the Institute of Marxism Leninism, Moscow, Abani Mukherji and Acharya were delegates from India. Abani was listed in brackets as "Leftwing Socialist" and Acharya as IRP, which probably stands for Indian Revolutionaries' Party or Committee in Tashkent. That such an organisation existed in 1917-20 is known to us from other sources, including Soviet sources.

THIRD CONGRESS OF THE CI
22 June to 12 July 1921

Here we have the source—the book with the title *Third Congress of the Communist International,* Stenographic Report (Seal of RSFSR bearing the motto "Knowledge Is Strength"), Petrograd, State Publications, 1922.

We have in our Archives 22 pages microfilmed from this book, which contain references to India. On pages 8-9 is reproduced the circular convening the congress. It says: "Indian communist group to be invited, without vote." On page 694 there is a reference to four delegates from India

(Communist Party) This tallies with the information brought by Sehanavis from the Institute of Marxism-Leninism which says there were four representatives from India but only M N Roy's name is mentioned in the proceedings"

By June-July 1921, no communist group had been yet formed in India Dange's *Gandhi vs Lenin* had not yet been published, at least not reached abroad, after which his correspondence with M N Roy started None of the Muhajirs had yet returned after which *Inquilab* was started in Lahore (1922) Nalini Gupta reached India some time in November or December 1921 He had brought with him the Mss of the Manifesto to the Ahmedabad Congress" (December 1921) which was signed Communist Party of India' By July 1921 Muzaffar Ahmad had not yet been contacted by Nalini Gupta

But the CPI had been formed in Tashkent on 17 October 1920, and in June July 1921 a number of Indians were in Moscow Firstly, some 20 Muhajirs were studying Marxism Leninism in the University of the Peoples of the East, many of whom had already joined the CPI There were, besides, some 14 Indian revolutionaries, headed by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Dr Bhupendra Nath Dutta, present at that time in Moscow to negotiate with the Bolshevik leaders about assistance to India's struggle for independence Among these were the following personalities M Barakatullah, Pandurang Khankhoje, Abdul Rab Peshawari, Mandayam Pratiwadi Bhayankar Tirumal Acharya, Birendra Nath Das Gupta, 'Daud Ali' Datt, G A K Luhani M N Roy of course was there Abani Mukherji was not present at the time of the Third Congress, according to Roy (*Memoirs*) he was in Tashkent

But with all this, we have absolutely no clue from the sources available to us as to who those other three Indian delegates were Further, does the mention of Communist Party in brackets against the mention of four delegates from India mean that the formation of the CPI in Tashkent is recognised by the CI? If so, why does the circular convening the Third Congress, issued after the formation of the Party in Tashkent, speak of 'Indian communist groups

to be invited *without vote*" (emphasis added)? We must also take note of the fact that M. N. Roy's manifesto to the Ahmedabad Congress is signed "Communist Party of India". Perhaps the CPI (Tashkent)[1] was recognised as the CPI. According to the *Memoirs* of M. N Roy, he was elected to the presidium of the Third Congress of the CI.

FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE CI
5 November to 5 December 1922

We have no microfilm extracts from the Russian stenographic report of this congress. Devendra Kaushik who brought us the microfilm extracts from the other volumes says that the volume of the stenographic report of the Fourth Congress of the CI was missing in the library of the Tashkent University where he was working.

However we have the information brought by Sehanavis from the Institute of Marxism-Leninism which says that four delegates were invited from India but only one came and his name is not mentioned. This is confirmed by two references in the *Inprecor*. In volume II of this journal in No. 112, page 941, we have the report of the credential committee submitted by Eberlein. It says referring to India: "The CPI cannot represent definite membership since its work is illegal Four delegates were invited, one has come and has been admitted to the congress with the right to vote." In the same volume, in No 116, pages

1. S. A Dange in his book *When Communist Differ* says. "The Communist Party of India was first founded in Tashkent by a group of emigre revolutionaries in the year 1920 As some of the leading figures like M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherji and others were already in the Comintern, the Communist Party was immediately given affiliation to the International. It published a journal in English, which was described as the organ of the Communist Party of India, section of the Communist International." (This "journal" was *The Vanguard* whose issue No 7, Vol II, dated 1 March 1923 bears the legend "Central Organ of the Communist Party of India (Sec. Communist International)". The journal was started abroad on 15 May 1922 when it was called *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* and its earlier issues did not bear the above subtitle—G.A.)

988-90, we have a brief summary of what "Roy (India)" reported on the "Eastern Question".

Thus at the time of the Fourth Congress of the CI we have unambiguous reference in the official documents of the CI to the functioning of the Communist Party in India itself (Eberlein's Report) There is another such unambiguous and clearer reference In his speech winding up the plenary session of the Fourth Congress of the CI, Zinoviev, the president of the CI, is reported to have said

The creation of a strong nucleus of a Communist Party in a distant country has now more political importance than the Versailles treaty, than the Lausanne conference The creation of a nucleus of a Communist Party in India, for example, is from the historical point of view a much more important matter than all these conferences'

This is quoted in *Communism in India, 1924-1927,* by *Lt Col Cecil Kaye, compiled by the Intelligence Bureau of* the Government of India and published then as a "confidential' report for government and police use from Calcutta in 1927 This has to be checked up from the original Russian protocol of the congress All the same a number of important events in the middle of 1922 prove that the communist movement in India had already emerged and a nucleus of the CPI was already attempting to establish all India contacts

M N Roy's first paper *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* began publication from 15 May 1922 (date of first issue) and by June the British Indian police began intercepting it

The Muhajirs began returning to India by the spring of 1922 By May-June 1922 the Peshawar Conspiracy Cases started convicting the accused to various terms of rigorous imprisonment The 17 Muhajirs whom Roy had trained in Tashkent and Moscow in 1920 21, and whose return to India in 1922 was announced by him in one of his earliest letters to Dange, were all arrested or traced on crossing into India (*Ibid*, p 20) All the same Ghulam Hussain starts *Inquilab* (Urdu) from Lahore sometime after June 1922

The Socialist edited by S A Dange began publication from August 1922 In the *Inprecor* dated 17 July 1922 there

is a brief item inviting the Indian Communist Party to send delegates to the Fourth Congress of the CI

By the autumn of 1922 the British Indian police were writing in their confidential report that Roy's contacts in India were *Bengal*—Muzaffar Ahmad, *Bombay*—S A Dange, *Madras*—Singaravelu Chettiar, *UP*—Shaukat Usmani, *Punjab*—Ghulam Hussain

M N Roy knew that an insertion in *Inprecor* could not enable Indian delegates to come to the Fourth Congress So in September 1922 Roy sent Charles Ashleigh secretly to India on behalf of the CI to meet Dange and also to contact Muzaffar Ahmad Earlier Roy wrote a letter to Muzaffar announcing Ashleigh's arrival In this he also wrote that he wanted Chittaranjan Das and Subhas Bose to come to the Fourth Congress of the CI and asked Muzaffar to transmit these letters

Roy sent Ashleigh to Dange in order to invite him to the Fourth Congress of the CI or to send a representative This becomes clear from two letters from Roy to Dange dated 26 September 1922 and another dated 3 October 1922 In the first letter Roy says "I hope you have already received other messages from me through a different channel and trust the message will be responded to satisfactorily" 'Through a different channel obviously means Ashleigh's visit What response' Roy expected from Dange becomes clear from the next letter In that letter (dated 3 October 1922) Roy acknowledged a letter from Dange which appears to have contained Dange's proposal for starting a Socialist League for India Roy wrote that this had better be post poned until after the Fourth Congress (of the Comintern) which he invited Dange to attend in person, or to send a representative, and promised "suitable arrangement and support for *The Socialist* as well as literature and literary contributions' (*Ibid*, pp 32-34)

Ashleigh's mission proved a failure Soon after he started from London the Scotland Yard suspected that a "communist emissary" was on the way to India and alerted the British Indian police here Thus Ashleigh was under police surveillance right from the time he landed in Bombay Probably his passport was taken away and he was forced to leave

India by the next boat (he arrived on 19 September 1922 and left on 22 September)

Now as stated earlier Ashleigh's arrival was notified to Muzaffar Ahmad in advance, with the code name "Nandalal", and Cecil Kaye in his *Communism in India* (p 26) says that Muzaffar sent Jatin Mitra to Bombay to see Ashleigh and he did meet him.

ASHLEIGH VISIT CONTROVERSY

Here I would like to mention the fact that Muzaffar Ahmad has recited the whole story of 'The Remarkable Charles Ashleigh" on pages 262-63 and again on pages 316-26 of his book *Myself and the Communist Party of India* and I take the opportunity to refute the new slander which Muzaffar with his characteristic blind prejudice is trying to spread against S A Dange in this connection This new slander is that Dange 'pocketed the money" which Charles Ashleigh allegedly gave him for sending four delegates from India to the Fourth Congress of the CI which was to meet at the end of the year Undaunted by the fiasco which the 'Dange Letters" slander he sponsored in 1964, and which he has repeated in his book again, suffered, Muzaffar has continued his researches into the British police records in the National Archives and has made new "discoveries" on which he bases his new slander This time the new slander has been contemptuously disregarded by the public and no wonder, because the socalled evidence he has advanced only exposes Muzaffar Ahmad himself

On page 319 of his book Muzaffar says "Ashleigh then handed over to Dange the letters, documents and the passage money for delegates to the Fourth Congress I do not know what the exact amount was, but, according to Masood Ali Shah, the British spy it was £800, possibly in eight one hundred-pound notes"

So evidence No 1 is the gossip Muzaffar collected from one whom he himself condemns as a British spy Shaukat Usmani who went to Moscow a second time in 1928 with Masood Ali Shah and two others also says he was a spy (his unpublished *Memoirs*)

Muzaffar's second evidence is an extract from IPI Report W/MISC 422, Home Dept Political File No 956 of 1922, page 11 This document is a report which British agent H R", stationed in Paris, sent about what he learnt from George Slocombe, a well-known representative of *Daily Herald*, who was known to Charles Ashleigh and is supposed to have met him in Paris after the latter's return from India The relevant passage in this "report" is "Ashleigh met a certain Indian with whom the editor was in touch, and handed over to this Indian passage money for delegates, who were invited to join Roy, and the invitation issued by Roy Slocombe added that the English editor was a communist" (*Ibid*, pp 324-25)

Now Muzaffar Ahmad had no direct information about the actual visit of Ashleigh to Bombay He himself says on page 320 of his book "Dange told us everything that I have written above about Ashleigh, *barring the fact of his taking the money*" (emphasis added)

For bolstering up his lie Muzaffar relies upon gossip—which he himself picked up from a "British spy", Masood Ali Shah, and which a British agent picked up allegedly from George Slocombe in Paris in 1922 and which his "research workers" picked up from the National Archives When Muzaffar wrote his article on the alleged "Dange Letters" in 1964 he never mentioned this lie of Dange taking money from Ashleigh But the Masood Ali Shah "evidence" must have been with him then for Masood Ali went to Moscow a second time with Shaukat Usmani and never returned He brings out the lie now after he gets the alleged Slocombe evidence!

And what is the worth of his evidence? The Indian police had the "evidence" in their hands in 1922, i e long before they launched the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case against Dange, Muzaffar and others From the Sessions Court judgement in that case we found that Ashleigh's meeting with Dange is considered an important link in the "conspiracy" Dange who admitted in his statement before the court that Ashleigh met him and that he had "issued a statement in the vernacular press on 5 7 1923 stating the facts as they were", also stated that he had differences

with Roy on the question of programme and that he had told Ashleigh this But the sessions judge disbelieving Dange's statement—the latter *part of it—says in the judgement* Dange did tell Ashleigh he (Dange) would support Roy's conspiracy "

Now, if the police and British government in India had in their hands already in 1922 this evidence that Ashleigh paid Dange the passage money for sending delegates to the Fourth Congress of CI why did they not bring it forward to further strengthen the question of conspiracy against Dange and Muzaffar? Obviously because they knew that evidence was worthless and could not be proved But what is thrown away as worthless by the class enemy is picked up by the great revolutionary Muzaffar in his holy crusade against revisionism!

This may appear as a digression but in dealing with the question of delegates from India to the Fourth Congress, the exposure of Muzaffar Ahmad's slanderous charge against Dange in this connection is unavoidable In spite of these efforts no delegate, direct from India, went to that congress We have M N Roy's letter to Dange dated 12 December 1922, in which he says 'The absence of anybody *straight from India was lamented'* (Exhibit 7, Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, emphasis added)[2]

We have already quoted the official record which says "four invited—one came—admitted with right to vote" In *Inprecor,* Vol II, No 116, dated 22 December 1922, we

2 S A Dange in his latest book *Where Communist Differ* on page 3 section 6 says 'The Bombay group had come into existence on the basis of the book *Gandhi vs Lenin* which I had written and published in March 1921 I had also organised and started the publication of an English weekly paper called *The Socialist* from August 1922 The book and the paper came to the attention of Lenin and the Communist International They invited me to go to Moscow, and the ECCI of the Communist International put me in charge of the work in India"

Dange's remarks are confirmed by M N Roy's letter dated 11 November 1922 in which he says "The old man is interested in your book"—and also by another letter from Roy dated 19 December 1922 "in which he issued instructions consequent on the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the CI—he appointed Dange to be 'the centre in India" (*Communism in India* pp 24 and 65)

find that M. N. Roy presented the Draft Theses on the Eastern Question, which were "prepared by all the Eastern delegations present at this congress in cooperation with the Eastern Section of the Communist International" and made the principal report on the same Was Roy the one delegate who came? It is quite likely that Roy attended the congress as a member of the ECCI and as a member of its "Eastern Section" and the "one delegate came" and who was not straight from India was probably either Santokh Singh or Rattan Singh, both of whom we definitely know went to Moscow at the end of 1922 to attend the Fourth Congress of the CI This fact is of course mentioned by Cecil Kaye[3] But apart from this we have the evidence of Dr Bhupendra Nath Dutta who met them in Berlin at the end of 1922 when they were going to Moscow (*Aprakashita Rajnaitik Itihas*, pp 349 50) It is quite certain that both attended the congress One of them was a delegate with a right to vote

Nalini Gupta in his statement to the police dated 27 December 1923 describing his arrival in Moscow in October 1922 (when he came out from India the second time) says " arrived in Moscow on the 3rd October via Petrograd . I was detained in Moscow up to middle of December 1922 Roy himself arrived in Moscow shortly before the congress of the Third International which began on the 5th November The Indians who attended the congress are myself, Ali Shah, M N Roy and two delegates who came from India (?) and belonged to the Ghadr Party The name of one of them was Anup Singh These two persons held private conferences with Roy, Tivel (Comintern secretary for Middle East) and Safarov, the general secretary of the CI for the East ... I noticed these two individuals writing

3 On page 50 of *Communism in India* we find "The Ghadr in California sent two representatives Santokh Singh and Rattan Singh to attend the Fourth Congress"

The same author quotes the remark of Zinoviev, president of CI his summing up speech mentioned earlier

Roy is reported to have said "The Communist International is satisfied with the progress so far made in India where promising results have been obtained with a small outlay of money" (*loc cit*)

long reports on the work done in the Punjab for the information of the Comintern!" (National Archives of India, GOI, Home-Pol File 21/1, 1924)

FIFTH CONGRESS OF THE CI
17 June to 8 July 1924

This congress was held soon after the death of Lenin, and the first in which he did not participate It was attended by 504 delegates from 49 Communist and Workers' Parties and one revolutionary people's party Delegates from other international mass organisations like the RILU, Communist Youth International, International Workers' Relief, etc also attended

The Stenographic Report of the Fifth World Congress of the Communist International—17th June to 8th July 1924, Part I, State Publications, Moscow, 1925, Leningrad, mentions that 'Roy (India) was elected to the presidium of the congress and also to the political and programme commissions of the same" *Inprecor*, Vol IV, No 34, on pages 343-44, mentions that three comrades were elected to the National and Colonial Commission According to the information obtained by Sehanavis from the Institute of Marxism Leninism, there were two delegates with decisive vote at the congress, viz M N Roy and Mohammad Ali Who was then the third Indian comrade on the National and Colonial Commission? This is likely to be Clemens Dutt, who was later associated with M N Roy and Mohammad Ali in a Foreign Bureau" of the CPI This is just a guess and will have to be checked up

The Vanguard of Indian Independence, Vol IV, Nos 11-12, dated 1 and 15 May 1924 (joint No) carried on page 5 the agenda of the Fifth Congress of the Communist International Item 6 of this was National Questions and section (b) of this was '(b) The revolutionary movement in the East and the colonies (India and others) Reporters Katayama, Roy and other comrades"

M N Roy's speech is given in *Inprecor*, Vol IV, No 38, dated 27 June 1924 Roy's intervention on Zinoviev's report on the activities and tactics of the CI is given in the same

journal in Vol IV, No 42, 17 July 1924 The antiwar appeal issued by the congress on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the first imperialist war was signed among others by Roy as a member of the presidium of the congress[4]

The Fifth Congress of the CI took place soon after the arrests for the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case had taken place These arrests were effected in all the four provinces where communist groups had come into existence or were in the process of formation Ghulam Hussain was arrested in the Punjab, Shaukat Usmani in UP, Muzaffar Ahmad and Nalini Gupta in Calcutta, and S A Dange in Bombay There was a warrant of arrest for Singaravelu Chettiar but it was not implemented because of his illness Ghulam Hussain made an approver's statement to the police and he was not produced for trial and the case against him was withdrawn The point here is that the arrests having taken place some time before the case was actually launched in April 1924, it was not possible for any delegate to go from India

What was not possible in 1922, because of the elementary stage of the movement, could have been possible in 1924 had it not been for the arrests This is shown by the fact that at the beginning of 1924 Gopen Chakravarty did manage get away from India secretly with the help of Nalini Gupta, who after his several trips since the end 1921 to the beginning of 1924 had acquired sufficient experience in this matter Gopen recalls that he heard of the Kanpur arrests just when he had reached Berlin He says he was present at the Fifth Congress along with M N Roy and Mohammad Ali He says Rahmat Ali Zakaria and Noor

4 *Inprecor*, Vol IV, No 50, dated 25 July 1924, contains Roy's concluding speech on the Colonial Question (No 54 of 4 August 1924 gives Manuilskis speech in which he says that Roy is still taking the sectarian position on the question which Lenin criticised at the Second Congress) The same issue also records that at the 18th session of the Fifth Congress a resolution condemning the Kanpur prosecutions was read out by the British delegate MacMaunus It also confirms that India had two decisive votes and that Roy was elected a candidate member of the presidium and adds that India was granted 10 mandates and that Roy was elected to the ECCI

Ahmad were also present Perhaps all of them were observers or delegates without vote

EVENTS BETWEEN FIFTH AND SIXTH CONGRESSES

The four years between the Fifth and Sixth Congresses of the CI—the years from 1924 to 1928—witnessed a remarkable development of the communist movement in India Far from being crushed by the brutal repression launched against it by the British imperialists through such conspiracy cases as those of Peshawar and Cawnpore sentencing communists to long jail terms, the Communist Party emerged during these years, at the head of an upsurge of militant struggles of workers and peasants, building a militant class-conscious wing of the trade union movement It came forward building legal workers' and peasants' parties, acting as an independent political force as well as a nucleus of a leftwing in the National Congress advocating complete independence and a programme of democratic revolution It came forward popularising among the masses the idea that the international working-class movement fighting for socialism, the first socialist state—the Soviet Union—born out of the great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, and countries like China fighting for their independence against the common enemy, British imperialism—were allies of India in its own independence struggle It came forward popularising the ideas of scientific socialism as the guide for the future development of independent India

On the eve of the Sixth Congress was published a voluminous report of the activity of the ECCI from the Fifth to the Sixth Congresses summing up the activities of Communist Parties in all the countries of the world between the years 1924 to 1928 The book is entitled *The Communist International Between the 5th and the 6th World Congresses, 1924 28* (A Report on the position in all the sections of the World Communist Party) (Reports up to May 1928), Publication of the CPGB, July 1928

The section on India is on pages 463 to 477 This report was probably prepared by the Eastern Bureau of the ECCI

sometime between May and July 1928 This means the report was prepared after M N Roy left Moscow, which he did some weeks after the ninth plenum of the ECCI held in February 1928 (*Memoirs*—Epilogue, pp 580 81) It is well known that thereafter Roy never returned to Moscow, that he did not participate in any way in the preparation of the Sixth Congress, and that he did not attend that congress At the Sixth Congress, the decolonisation theory" attributed to M N Roy was sharply criticised

Before we quote from this report extracts which sum up the organisational position of the Indian party in the period since 1924 to the beginning of 1928, it would be useful to briefly catalogue the highlights of the activities of the ECCI and of M N Roy during the period

The fifth enlarged plenum of the ECCI elected at the Fifth Congress met in Moscow from 21 March to 6 April 1925 This session undertook a detailed examination of the National and Colonial Question and on 6 April 1925 adopted a resolution on the situation in India, Indonesia and Egypt which made certain recommendations on the programmatic and tactical questions to the communists of these countries

About India it said One of the most important tasks of our comrades in India at the present moment is to work actively in the national freedom movement on the eve of a decisive struggle for the independence of India" It recommended to the Indian communists to continue their work in the Indian National Congress and the all-India mass organisations, with the aim of creating "a national revolutionary mass party and an all-India anti imperialist bloc", to find ways and means "to force the Indian bourgeoisie to conduct a decisive political struggle and to support all militant actions against imperialism on the basis of an anti-imperialist united front" The plenum emphasised that the main task of the Indian communists was to work for uniting the communist groups and elements in order to build a strong party of the working class, the Communist Party (*The Communist International—A Short Historical Outline*, prepared by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPSU, 1969, German edition, pp 277-78)

The same plenum gave the slogan to the communists of the East to take initiative to form people's parties or workers and peasants' parties or to work in them if already formed, and seek to make them political organisations of an anti-imperialist front (*Ibid*, p 280)

As an elected member of the ECCI Roy participated in this plenum and was elected to the presidium and was also included in the political and colonial commissions of the same (*Inprecor*, Vol V, No 26, dated 4 April 1925)

After the reports of the First Communist Conference convened by Satyabhakta, 26-27 December 1925, reached Roy, together with the account of its proceedings with the emphasis on "national communism" in the speeches of Satyabhakta, Hasrat Mohani and Singaravelu, Roy wrote a letter to Bagerhatta on 20 March 1926 Bagerhatta, along with S V Ghate, was elected secretary of the CEC at the conference In this letter Roy recommended that in the next meeting of the Central Committee 'a resolution . be passed repudiating the previous statements' (those by Satyabhakta and others) and deciding 'to affiliate the CP of India with the CI and officially communicate the latter the resolution The formal affiliation cannot be effected until the next World Congress to which a delegation of the party must be sent—there will be plenty of time for it" (Meerut Case Records, Prosecution Exhibit, P 2169/1)

It was about this time that a bureau consisting of M N Roy, Mohammad Ali and Clemens Dutt was in charge of India on behalf of the Eastern Bureau of the ECCI, which included Roy This was functioning from Berlin, probably After the First Communist Conference at Kanpur (December 1925) Roy recommended that this bureau should find a place in the Constitution of CPI as the 'Foreign Bureau" The article on the 'Foreign Bureau" is in the Constitution of the CPI—1927'—as article No 14 (see printed pamphlet, *The Communist Party of India—Annual Report*—1927, Bombay, p 9)

This bureau with Roy at its head published from abroad a fortnightly *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* from May 1922 to December 1924 In between it changed its

name to *The Vanguard* and to *The Advance Guard*. Only the issue of 1923 of *The Vanguard* bore the legend "Organ of the CC of the CPI—Section of the CI". *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* was succeeded by *The Masses of India* which began publication in January 1925 and continued as a monthly up to December 1927.

The sixth enlarged plenum of the ECCI met from 17 February to 12 March 1926. M. N. Roy was elected chairman of the Eastern Commission. The plenum heard a report of the Eastern Commission submitted by Roy, adopted unanimously a resolution on the situation in China while the resolutions on other colonial countries were referred back to the presidium for precise formulation (*Inprecor*, Vol. VI, No. 17, dated 4 March 1922; No. 22, dated 15 April 1926).

Journals popularising ideology of communism (scientific socialism) and advocating class struggle and organisation of workers and peasants and emphasising their role in the struggle for complete independence, which were started after the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case, were *Mazdur* (Urdu); *Langal* (Bengali weekly), Calcutta, on 16 December 1925, *Kirti* (Punjabi monthly), end of 1926; *Mehnatkash* (Urdu), Lahore, 1927; and *Kranti* (Marathi weekly), Bombay, 7 May 1927. They were followed by *Krantikari* (Hindi weekly) organ of Kisan Sabha, from Jhansi 17 November 1928 and *Pyam-i Mazdur* (Urdu weekly) from Bombay in the beginning of 1929. *Langal*, which is associated with Muzaffar Ahmad from the beginning, in its evolution reflects the genesis of the workers' and peasants' parties. It started publication under the chief editorship of Poet Nazrul Islam as the organ of the Labour-Kisan-Swaraj Party (*Sampradaya* was the word used) of the Indian National Congress. This was carrying forward the earlier ideas of S. A. Dange and Singaravelu (see the Manifesto of Labour-Kishan Party May 1923 and Dange's *The Socialist* of May-June 1923). From 15 April 1926 *Langal* became the organ of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party. It carried on the front page Rabindranath's blessings in the meaningful lines:

Awake, awake, O Balaram
Hold-up your desert-breaking plough;
Give us strength! Give us fruit!
Silence this senseless commotion.

Langal stopped publication on 10 April 1926. It was revived again as *Ganavani* on 12 August 1926, again as the weekly organ in Bengali of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal. Under the editorship of Muzaffar Ahmad *Ganavani* became the organ of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal sometime in the beginning of 1928[5] In July 1927 it was still the organ of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal.

Though the Communist Conference held in Kanpur in the last days of December 1925 was convened by Satyabhakta, the representatives of genuine communist groups functioning in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Lahore and UP mustered strong and captured the central body formed at the conference. This Central Executive contained Muzaffar Ahmad, S. V. Ghate, Abdul Majid, K. N. Joglekar and R. S. Nimbkar. S. A. Dange was in jail. According to the annual report[6] submitted to the Annual Conference of the party held from 29 to 31 May 1927 in Bombay, this central body met soon after the Kanpur session in Calcutta. From Calcutta a manifesto on the Hindu-Muslim problem was issued in the name of the CPI (middle of 1926, probably drafted and sent from abroad by Roy). This was proscribed by the government later. At the end of 1926 (December) at the Gauhati session of the INC, a CPI manifesto was distributed (drafted by Roy).

According to the same report, an attempt was made to function a central office of the CPI from Delhi by Bagerhattá and S. V. Ghate who were elected secretaries at Kanpur. There was a police raid on the office and the

5 "It was renamed Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal in March 1928" after the Second Conference of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal held in Calcutta, 19 20 February, 1927 (Muzaffar Ahmad, *Communist Party and Its Formation Abroad*, 1962, p 161).

6 *The Communist Party of India—Annual Report*, 1927, published by Comrade Vijay Singh Mehta, 236 Kalbadevi Road, Bombay, for the CPI

attempt had to be given up (end of 1926). About the same time the Lahore group decided to call a general conference of the party at Lahore in February 1927 and invited S. D. Saklatvala, who was to arrive in India in January 1927, to preside over the conference. Saklatvala on his arrival issued a statement to the press stating that he could not associate with a Communist Party which was not regularly affiliated to the Communist International. Thereafter, Muzaffar Ahmad and other members of the Central Executive went to Bombay and held a meeting which adopted a resolution criticising Saklatvala for giving his statement to the press.

At the same time the Central Executive members met Saklatvala both in Bombay and later in Delhi and the latter agreed to the necessity of having a Communist Party in India. It was then decided to call the general meeting in Bombay on 29 May and to adopt a constitution and to elect the executive. The Bombay meeting held in January 1927 also adopted a resolution to form workers' and peasants' parties in the different provinces and adopted a programme for the same which is identical with the programme of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party or the Labour-Kisan-Swaraj Party of Bengal (Meerut Record, D 362—CPI file of Bagerhatta).

According to the annual report quoted above the general conference actually met on 31 May 1927 in Bombay and adopted a Constitution, elected the executive and passed a number of resolutions. The pamphlet entitled *Annual Report* quoted above gives the text of all these decisions taken by the meeting of 31 May 1927. These throw interesting light on the question of the affiliation of the CPI with the CI and on the question of delegates to the next World Congress. They also throw light on the relation of the CPI to the workers' and peasants' parties being formed in the different parts of India, and which were leading the mass upsurge of the class-struggle and class-organisation of workers and peasants which spread all over India particularly in the industrial centres and in its rural surroundings in 1927-28.

We have already referred to article No 14 on "Foreign Bureau" which is included in the Constitution of the CPI

adopted at the May meeting (1927) in Bombay This article is not there in the Constitution adopted at the Kanpur Conference (see Meerut Records, Exhibit P 1142 and P 1145) The 'Foreign Bureau" article was included later on the recommendation of M N Roy (typed letter from M N Roy to Bagerhatta, dated February or March 1926, Exhibit D 375 of Meerut Records) It is interesting to compare the text about 'Foreign Bureau" suggested by Roy in the abovementioned letter and the actual wording as included in the Constitution as adopted in Bombay and printed in the *Annual Report*

Roy's suggestion reads as follows

The Communist Party of India will maintain a 'Foreign Bureau' as the ideological centre composed of comrades who are not in a position to work inside the country The Foreign Bureau will be representative of Central Committee and will act as the organ through which the international relations of the party will be maintained *The CP of India will be section of the Communist International*" (Meerut Records, Exhibit D 375, emphasis added)

The same file contains a typed draft Constitution of the CPI consisting of 21 articles In this draft the Central Executive is defined as composed of president, secretariat and members of the CEC, all elected at the congress Article No 18 is on Foreign Bureau, which is word for word the same as above *except* for the last sentence (italicised above) which has been deleted

The Constitution adopted in Bombay (May 1927) and printed in the *Annual Report*, consists of 21 articles Here the CEC is composed of the presidium consisting of five members, the general secretary and the treasurer and eight other members all elected at the congress Article No 14 on the Foreign Bureau is reformulated thus

"*Foreign Bureau*—The Presidium with the sanction of the CE will maintain a Foreign Bureau as an ideological centre composed of comrades who are not in a position to work inside the country The Foreign Bureau will be representative of the CE and will act as the organ through which the international relations of the party will be maintained But it will not act in any way inconsistent with the

party's programme and resolutions. The Foreign Bureau will have a regular office at place at their convenience and will *keep a constant touch with all the CPs and the Comintern and will give publicity to Indian affairs*" (*The Annual Report*, 1927, pp 9-10, emphasis added).

Here a brief comment on the question of affiliation to the CI, summing up the position from 1921 to 1928, is necessary. As we have pointed out earlier, the Indian delegates to the Third World Congress of the CI (1921) were for the first time listed as from the CPI and this can only be on the basis of the temporary affiliation granted to the emigre CPI formed in Tashkent. In 1922 when communist groups came into existence in India Roy tried to get their representatives to come to the CI (his letter to Dange, Ashleigh's visit, etc.). When this effort failed Roy tried to get Indian comrades to come to Europe for a conference with him for the same purpose This was in 1923. But this effort also did not succeed because of the arrests preparatory to the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case and because of the actual case launched in April-May 1924, i e. just on the eve of the Fifth Congress. Since the Kanpur Conference (December 1925) Roy insisted that the Central Executive which had then come into existence should adopt a resolution deciding to affiliate the Indian party to the CI and making an application to that effect. The Central Executive responded to this suggestion of Roy in the form we have given above. Without saying anything about the affiliation, the Constitution adopted creates and maintains a bureau which is to keep in constant touch with the CI and other CPs.

This article on the "Foreign Bureau" in the Constitution adopted by the Central Executive in May 1927 means full acceptance of the principle of affiliation to the CI by the party in India. This is proved by the fact that when at the beginning of 1929, before the Meerut arrests, a draft Constitution of the underground CPI was made, defining the party as the section of the CI and mentioning the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the preamble, that draft contains the identical article on the Foreign Bureau, word for word (Meerut Records, Exhibit P 416/7).

It is important to note that Roy was insisting that the party formed in India should take the decision in its Central Executive to affiliate to the CI. He did not consider that the affiliation given to the CPI formed in Tashkent is *ipso facto* transferred to the party formed in India. This became particularly necessary because at the Kanpur Communist Conference convened by Satyabhakta, there was a strong trend of "national communism". Satyabhakta and his colleagues were saying that the CPI should be a party of "national communism" and should not be affiliated to the Communist International. This trend was defeated and Satyabhakta and his supporters left the conference. Though the conference did not pass any resolution about CPI affiliating itself to the CI, the groups which were already maintaining relations with the CI dominated the CEC elected at the conference.

But the speeches and statements of Satyabhakta at the time of the conference had "made a bad impression abroad". When Roy got full reports of all that had happened at Kanpur, he wrote as above and asked the next meeting of the CEC to pass a resolution about affiliation and he sent the draft about the "Foreign Bureau". Inclusion of that para in the amended form in the CPI Constitution at the Bombay meeting of the CEC in May 1927 has the full force of the decision to affiliate, despite the words.

The same meeting adopted a resolution saying: "The CPI desires, that a delegation composed of Comrades J. P. Bagerhatta, Muzaffar Ahmad, R. S. Nimbkar to travel to Great Britain and the continent to study labour conditions in those countries. The delegation shall submit a report to the party." This again confirms that the CEC was desirous of sending a delegation to establish direct contact with the CI to formalise the question of affiliation. Of course putting it in that harmless way would never have got the comrades mentioned in the resolution passports to go abroad from the British government. They had to go illegally, if they wanted to go, but that did not materialise

Another wrong idea of the initiators of the Kanpur Conference was that the Communist Party of India can be organised legally and could function legally. This wrong

idea arose because of the wrong understanding of what the High Court Judge had said in his judgement in the Cawnpore Case. He had said that propaganda of communism *ipso facto* was not illegal. He said the accused in the case were convicted because they were conspiring to overthrow British rule in India. Satyabhakta's illusions about legalism arose out of his economism. He failed to see that communist propaganda and the organisation of workers and peasants for their political class demands could not be separated from the main task of the CP at the time, viz to work for complete independence, for the overthrow of British rule over India. Communists who came to the conference were clear on this point. They came there to see that the CPI is not captured by bogus people in the name of holding a legal conference. Besides they also wanted to probe the possibilities of functioning the party legally. This question was discussed systematically in the communist press after the Cawnpore Case. It was raised in Bagerhatta's open letter to M. N. Roy published in *The Socialist*, Vol. II, No. 38, 21 September 1924. Roy replied to it in detail in a letter from Zurich of 22 October 1924. The reply made it clear that while we fully utilise all legal possibilities of work, the CPI as such has to work and function illegally, while forming such broad parties as workers' and peasants' parties to fight for raising the struggle for independence to a militant and revolutionary plane.

At Kanpur in 1925 even the communists to a certain extent were affected by the legalist illusion Muzaffar Ahmad in one of his earlier works has made a self-criticism to that effect though in the latest book *Myself and the CPI* he puts it all on the head of Dange, who was not even present in Kanpur, being then in jail.

In his pamphlet *Communist Party of India—Years of Formation, (1921-1933)* published in August 1959 (NBA, Calcutta), Muzaffar Ahmad wrote about the Kanpur Conference as follows:

"We brought together the communists of various places in the country and *constituted for the first time the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India* in the Kanpur Conference itself. The conference was held openly. There-

fore the committee was also constituted openly For this we had to face plenty of criticism both at home and abroad *We deserved this criticism* But there was no other way either Had we not joined the conference at Kanpur, Satya bhakta's separate communist party would have considerably hindered our work in the future" (p 20, emphasis added) 'When the first Central Committee of the Communist Party was constituted in Kanpur, Comrades S V Ghate and Janaki Prasad Bagerhatta became joint secretaries" (p 21)

But the same Muzaffar Ahmad, now after the split, the high priest of the anti-Dange slander campaign under the banner of the CPM, attacks the CPI for sticking to the agreed decision of the united party that the foundation date of the party should be the date of the formation of the first Central Committee of the party at the Kanpur Conference (26 December 1925) This is what he writes about the Kanpur Conference now, in his latest book

'Anyway, I think the Communist Conference in Kanpur was a disgraceful affair After the three communist conspiracy cases in Peshawar and the Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case, how could one think of tracing the foundation of the Communist Party to the farce staged by Satyabhakta? We, some of us, formed—rather were forced to form—a committee in Kanpur Satyabhakta tarnished the name of the Communist Party If Satyabhakta had not contrived his farce, the Communist Party would have been an underground organisation and Dange perhaps would not have joined it" (*Ibid*, page 413)

The counterposing of the two paragraphs speaks for itself No further comment is needed here Muzaffar's earlier paragraph corresponds to our earlier common understanding and we still stand by it Legalist illusions at the conference were reflected in the resolutions adopted there, especially in the following resolution

'That the conference resolves that the Labour Kisan Party of Hindusthan be dissolved and the *Labour Kisan Gazette* be the organ of the Party" (Meerut Records, Exhibit D 374/22)

All this was corrected in the subsequent meetings of the

CEC, particularly in the meeting held on 31 May 1927, to which we have referred to earlier. In the *Annual Report* (pp. 13-14) the relationship between the CPI and the workers' and peasants' parties being formed in different provinces is correctly put:

"The Communist Party of India approves of the programme laid down by the workers' and peasants' parties of Bengal and Bombay and Rajputana and enjoins the members to work on this programme. The members shall try to form similar organisations where such do not exist."

This meeting also reconstituted the CEC. Comparing the CEC elected at Kanpur with the one reorganised in Bombay (May 1927) we find that Azad Sobhani, Satyabhakta, Balaram Chaubey, Radha Mohan Gokuljee, Ramachandra and Kameshwar Rao are dropped and in their places are taken S. A. Dange (then still in jail), Abdul Halim, Gaur Rahaman (Darveshi), S. N. Tagore (Saumyendra Nath Tagore) and S. M. Mistry. S. V. Ghate is general secretary and S. M. Mistry treasurer. S. A. Dange is in the presidium together with Muzaffar, Gaur Rahaman, K. S. Iyengar and Bagerhatta. In the Executive besides these are Singaravelu, Hasrat Mohani, R. S. Nimbkar, M. A. Majid, K. N. Joglekar, S. N. Tagore, Abdul Halim and S. D. Hussain (Lahore). *Ganavani, Mehnatkash* and *Kranti* are listed as "organs (nonofficial)". Significantly, neither *Kirti* nor Kirti-Kisan Party (Punjab) is mentioned. Another significant fact is that Saumyendra Nath Tagore is listed as member of the CEC. According to Muzaffar Ahmad, S. N. Tagore "remained in the Workers' and Peasants' Party from January 1926 to April 1927. Meanwhile he had also joined the Communist Party of India" (*The CPI and Its Formation Abroad*, p. 158). In the same place Muzaffar also states that S. N. Tagore left for Europe in April 1928. Later he appeared in Moscow at the time of the Sixth World Congress of the CI and was elected delegate to that congress. We will come to this point presently; here we only want to state that Muzaffar Ahmad nowhere mentions that S. N. Tagore was elected to the CEC of the CPI in May 1927, though this could not take place without Muzaffar's recommendation.

After this long digression about the developments in the communist movement in India between 1924 and 1928 let us quote how the same situation is summed up in the report of the CI—*CI Between the Fifth and the Sixth Congresses* We are only quoting relevant generalisations from a 14-page printed report in the abovenamed volume. After summing up the "economic position", the "political situation", the policies of the bourgeoisie, and the class struggle in India in the cities and in rural areas, the report goes on to say:

"The problem of the organisation of a genuine Communist Party as the vanguard of the proletariat, which must be the leader of the national revolution, is still to be solved. Simultaneously with the attempt to form a legal Communist Party, there appeared in the various provinces a number of workers' and peasants' parties in which communist groups have taken a part. Growing originally as leftwing organisations within the Indian National Congress, these parties have since acquired an independent status as self-contained political parties. Of the four WPPs formed during 1925-27 those of Bengal and Bombay alone have been politically active and have given themselves certain organisational shape. The Bengal WPP (originally called the Labour-Swaraj Party) was formed at the end of 1927 and has already held three annual conferences. Its policy is formulated in the report of the Executive Committee of the Bengal WPP submitted to the last annual conference held in March-April 1928."

About the Bombay WPP the report said that it has "succeeded in acquiring a predominant influence among *the large industrial proletariat of Bombay. It* was by its initiative in organisation that 30,000 workers of Bombay assembled in a separate political demonstration with revolutionary slogans on the occasion of the Simon Commission to India and in connection with the national campaign of boycott against the commission."

About the strike wave in 1927-28 and the emergence of the red-flag (class-conscious) unions, the report says:

"It is, however, in connection with the present strikes that both the Bengal and Bombay WPP have shown themselves to be in the closest contact with the industrial prole-

tariat in big centres Both in the railway strike in Bengal and the textile strike in Bombay, the members of the WPP have not only taken the most active part in organising strike action but have also gained the enthusiastic confidence of the workers to the extent of being chosen by them as their leaders in preference to the bourgeois reformists who have up till now led the trade union movement .

"A conference is now being convoked where the existing WPPs propose to form themselves into an All-India Workers and Peasants' Party"

As we see from these formulations and from the report as a whole, the CI was accurately seized of the situation in India This is not at all surprising The *cordon sanitaire* so to speak, which the British imperialists sought to clamp round India to isolate it from the international working-class and communist movement had broken down, thanks to the upsurge of the working class and peasant movement in India itself in the latter half of the twenties In hundreds of mass meetings of striking workers and demonstrating peasants in all the centres of struggles throughout the country the message of the October Socialist Revolution and its significance for India's freedom struggle were being openly preached The same was being done by *Kranti* (Marathi), *Ganavani* (Bengali), *Krantikari* (Hindi), *Kirti* (Punjabi), *Mehnatkash* (Urdu), *Pyam i Mazdur* (Urdu) in print week by week Mirajkar and Spratt who were being prosecuted for the pamphlet *India and China* calling for solidarity with China's liberation struggle and to which Saklatvala wrote a one-line foreword asking "my Indian friends to do likewise", were declared "not guilty" by the jury, thus quashing the prosecution launched by the government The two British communists, Bradley and Spratt, who did not hide their adherence to the international communist movement, were functioning semi-openly in working class and communist movement in 1927-28 But the Public Safety Bill being forged to get such "undesirable" British citizens expelled was at least for the time being blocked by the bold action of the then speaker of the Central Assembly, Vithalbhai Patel

Inspired by this workers' and peasants' mass upsurge,

youth leagues and Congress leftwing were demanding a new round of national struggle for independence, which was in the offing. British business in India was demanding drastic action against working-class and communist leaders and the British government was preparing for roundup of these for a new conspiracy case to smash this left movement before the national struggle started.

On a world plane, the communist movement was getting a broad mass base in the world working-class movement as well as in the freedom movement of the oppressed peoples. The first conference of the League against Imperialism, symbolising this militant unity in the spirit of Lenin's slogan, "Workers and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!" was being held in Brussels in February 1927. The Indian National Congress had sent Jawaharlal Nehru as its official delegate to this conference. The veteran Indian revolutionary Virendranath Chattopadhyaya (now for years in exile abroad) was the general secretary of this league. Among Indian students and Indian national revolutionaries abroad the trend towards communism was growing.

It was in this situation that the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International was convened by the ninth plenum of the ECCI meeting in February 1928. The congress was to meet in July 1928. The leading comrades in India knew in the beginning of 1928 that the Sixth Congress of the CI was to be held in the autumn. They also knew that M. N. Roy was no longer in the leading bodies of the CI nor was he at the headquarters of the organisation. Roy's articles on India continued to appear in the *Inprecor* up to March 1929. But comrades in India knew in the early months of 1928 that "Roy was all but actually ousted" (Muzaffar Ahmad, *Ibid.*, p. 453). From the same reference one can conclude that leading comrades in India had advance information of the coming Sixth Congress of the CI. This is not surprising. Despite the customs cordon of the British Indian police, issues of *Inprecor* were slipping in and Spratt and Bradley, who were already functioning in the Indian movement at the time, were also in close touch with the CPGB. All the same the party does not seem to have made an effort to send any official delegates This was probably

because of the heavy pressure of the mass upsurge of strike struggles and the difficulty of releasing responsible comrades for the job. However when towards the end of the year *Inprecor* issues carrying the reports of the congress began to arrive, it was noticed that a number of Indian delegates were not only present but their speeches at the congress were reported.

SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE CI
17 July to 1 September 1928

The congress met from 17 July to 1 September 1928. According to the official history of the CI recently published, there were 532 delegates representing 57 Communist and Workers' Parties and organisations like the RILU, International Workers' Relief, and the YCL at the congress. The total affiliated membership was given by the credential committee as 17 lakhs 99 thousand, of which 12 lakhs 10 thousand were accounted for by the CPSU(B). The proceedings of the congress are found in various issues of *Inprecor*, Volume VIII, No. 39 of 25 July 1928, reported that Sikandar Sur from India was included in the presidium as well as his speech greeting the congress. No 44 of 3 August 1928 gives another speech by Sikandar Sur and one by Raza, both from India. In No. 55 of 25 August 1928 the speech by Mahmud (India) is reported. Another speech by Sikandar and also by Raza are reported in No 61 dated 11 September 1928. Still another speech by Sikandar and one by Narayana are given in No. 66 of 25 September 1928. One of the main reports on "The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-colonies" by Otto Kuusinen is given in No. 68 of 4 October 1928 along with two co-reports on the same subject: one by Ercoli and another by Sikandar Sur. There were further speeches on the report, those by Narayana and Clemens Dutt (India)—these are given in No. 76 of 30 October 1928. Speeches by Raza and Sikandar are found in No. 78 of 8 November 1928. At the conclusion of the debate on the colonial report there were declarations by Luhani and Sikandar Sur which are printed in No. 81 of 21 November 1928. The English translation of *The Theses on the Revolu-*

tionary Movement in the Colonies and Semicolonies was published in full in No 88 dated 12 December 1928

According to authentic information got recently from the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC, CPSU, there were three Indian delegates with decisive vote and three others at the Sixth Congress Their "names' have been listed as follows

With Decisive Vote	*Others*
1 Sikandar Sur	1 Clemens Dutt
2 Raza	2 Mohammad Ali
3 Spencer (?)	3 ?

Indian delegates who spoke at the Sixth Congress according to *Inprecor* were (1) Sikandar Sur, (2) Raza, (3) Narayana, (4) Mahmud, (5) Clemens Dutt, (6) Luhani Of these, Mahmud (Mohammad Ali), Clemens Dutt and Luhani are real names All these three were working under the Eastern Bureau of CI at that time Mohammad Ali and Clemens Dutt were members of the Foreign Bureau of the CPI together with M N Roy This Foreign Bureau formed by Roy and which was functioning under the Eastern Bureau of the ECCI probably ceased to exist after the Sixth Congress (at the end of 1928) The article regarding the Foreign Bureau as we have pointed out earlier existed in the draft Constitution of the CPI (1929) prepared by the leading 'Meerut comrades" just before their arrest The point here is that Luhani seems to have stepped into the place of M N Roy and these three were the delegates at the Sixth Congress on behalf of the Eastern Bureau (India)

This leaves the three with decisive vote, being pseudonyms—and these are those who came secretly from India to attend the congress It is well known that though the CPI sent no official delegates Shaukat Usmani together with three Muhajir communists left India secretly and without the knowledge of the party, and some of them were admitted as delegates from India It is also well known that Sikandar Sur is Shaukat Usmani It is also known that Saumyendra Nath Tagore who was in Moscow from the middle of 1927, was also a delegate at the Congress and Narayana is Saumyendra Nath

About Shaukat Usmani and his colleagues we have two versions from Muzaffar Ahmad. In his *Communist Party of India and Its Formation Abroad* (p. 94) he writes:

"It was on the eve on the congress that Shaukat Usmani, Muhammad Shafiq, Habib Ahmed Naseem and Masood Ali Shah reached Moscow. There was hardly any time for scrutiny of their credentials. Besides it is very likely that the leaders of the Communist International were extremely happy to see delegates arriving from India. Thus all four were given the status as delegates, perhaps Habib Ahmed Naseem represented India at the Young Communist International. It was long after the Sixth Congress was over that news reached regarding the spurious character of their credentials."

In his latest book *Myself and the CPI* (pp. 449-50) Muzaffar gives his revised version of the same in the following words:

"Usmani and party reached Moscow just when the Sixth Congress of the Communist International was about to commence. Everybody was glad to see them, for it was the first time that an Indian delegation had travelled all the way from India to Russia in this manner to attend any congress of the Communist International. The delegates had not only heaps of credentials with them, they were also known persons. Shaukat had been released after serving his term of conviction in the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. His name was recorded in the register of the Communist International. Muhammad Shafiq was the first secretary of the emigrant section of the Communist Party of India, which was still a section of the Communist International. Shaukat Usmani and Shafiq were accepted as delegates to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International and the other two were possibly sent to the Congress of the Young Communist International. As for Shaukat Usmani, he was even elected to the Presidium of the Sixth Congress."

This second version is more accurate. We know from other sources that Raza is Mohammad Shafiq. So it appears that Shaukat Usmani and Mohammad Shafiq were the two of the three delegates with decisive vote. Who is "Spencer"?

Is he Luhani or Saumyendra Nath Tagore? According to Muzaffar Ahmad's chapter, Saumyendra Nath Tagore's Illegal Booklet'" in his *The Communist Party of India and Its Formation Abroad* (p 167), S N Tagore was still staying in Moscow when the Sixth Congress of the CI held its session He was allowed into the Congress as a delegate but without voting rights, that is to say, he could make speeches but could not cast his vote" Taking for granted Muzaffar's information that S N Tagore (Naravana) was a delegate without vote or with consultative vote (i e right to make speech) is correct then 'Spencer' must be Luhani The fact that Luhani made a declaration at the congress after the discussion on the colonial report may be taken as a proof that he was a delegate with a decisive vote

So the position is that the three Indian delegates with decisive vote at the Sixth World Congress of the CI were Shaukat Usmani, Mohammad Shafiq and Luhani while those with consultative vote were Clemens Dutt, Mohammad Ali and S N Tagore But the delegation that went from India was not a delegation from the Communist Party of India nor had it a mandate from the party This became known in Moscow after the congress ended and even after Shaukat Usmani left for India He arrived in India in December 1928 and appeared openly in Calcutta when the First All India Workers' and Peasants Conference was holding its sessions So it is necessary to find out and record what action was taken subsequently and what was the later history of the members of this socalled delegation

First let us briefly summarise what Muzaffar Ahmad says about this in his latest book and mostly in his own words

Attempts, of course, were being made to collect information from India about these delegates By the time we received a cryptic telegram from London in Calcutta and sent also a similarly cryptic reply, the Sixth Congress had ended We informed that delegates, without a single exception, had gone with forged credentials and there was one suspicious character among them, the rest being fools" (p 450)

"According to Raja Mahendra Pratap, he had seen Shafiq, Habib and Ali Shah going about together in Moscow

even in April, 1929: they used to stay at Hotel Look" (p. 451).

Again quoting Mahendra Pratap's letter to him (Muzaffar), he says: "one day at the dead of night one of these three was awakened and taken away to an unknown place and nothing had been heard of him since. The Soviet government must have found out that Masood Ali Shah was a British spy and he must have been taken to the place of execution that night" (p 450).

Towards the end of 1932, when the Meerut Case hearings had ended and the judge was writing the judgement—at that time Shaukat Usmani received a letter from M. Shafiq. This was sometime "in the latter half of 1932" (p. 451). Muzaffar Ahmad says he had read that letter· "The contents, as far as I can remember, were as follows: Shafiq had landed the previous day, he had come via Europe (whether it was via London, I cannot remember). Shafiq had written further. 'What's the good of your undergoing so much trouble? The affiliation of the Communist Party of India with the Communist International has been kept in abeyance'" (p. 452).

Muzaffar says, he does not know how Shafiq returned to India and what happened to him in Moscow between April 1929 and 1932. He does not know what happened to Habib. As for Masood Ali Shah, he says, quoting Mahendra Pratap's letter, he "was sentenced to death".

Muzaffar Ahmad puts together all the known evidence to prove that Masood Ali Shah was a British agent and adds something new. This new evidence is photostat of papers preserved in the India Office, London, which is a confidential report of the British intelligence officer attached to the British commercial mission in Moscow, sent to Lord Curzon, foreign secretary of the British government from 1919 to 1924. From these papers one learns that Masood contacted this British intelligence officer in Moscow as well as two other British officers in Berlin, gave them his code name as a British agent and said he knew Cecil Kaye, then DIG, CID in India, and made them a report (pp. 445-46). Muzaffar does not give the date of these papers but from the fact that the report includes the statement that Masood

was at the Fourth Congress of the CI (5 November to 5 December 1922) and from the fact that the communication is addressed to Lord Curzon as foreign secretary it must be sometime in early 1923. Nalini Gupta in his statement to the police after his arrest on 27 December 1923 confirms the fact that Ali Shah was at the Fourth Congress (quoted by us earlier).

Muzaffar Ahmad reaches three conclusions:

(1) Usmani knew that Masood was a suspicious character and still he decided to go with *him* because he thought that once in Moscow, 'he would snuff out the party in India at one breath" (p. 444) and if possible oust M. N. Roy and step into the vacancy (p. 453).

(2) But Roy was already "all but actually ousted" and Shaukat Usmani "would have been in danger if he had not run away hurriedly" (p. 453). After returning "he surrendered to the party through me... 'I'll', Usmani said 'submit to whatever punishment you may give me. Send me to work in some village'" (p. 449).

(3) At the meeting of the Communist Party of India held in December 1928, at the time of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference, "Usmani's actions in going to Moscow with forged credential in violation of party directions were not discussed. Everything was buried on the consideration that he had prayed for pardon immediately after his return. How weak was our party at that time! But it was decided at the party meeting that Shaukat Usmani should choose his place of work with Lahore as the centre" (pp. 452-53).

That Masood Ali Shah[7] was a British agent is a well-established fact. Apart from plenty of other evidence the

7. Later the actual document referred to was located by the writer in the National Archives of India. It is in the Home Department Political File of 1924, No. 115, the "subject" noted on it is "Report of Syed Masud Ali Shah on the Bolshevik Activities in India" It consists of two secret despatches addressed to Marquess Curzon of the British Foreign Office, London, from the British Commercial Mission in Moscow. They are dated 2 January 1923 and 10 January 1923 respectively. These letters are reports made by the intelligence official in the British Mission in Moscow of what Ali Shah told him when he (Ali Shah) contacted the mission

photostat of the India Office documents which Muzaffar Ahmad quotes perfunctorily without giving dates etc is quite conclusive But there are more facts which Muzaffar has not mentioned There are also contradictions in the facts mentioned by Muzaffar Muhajir fellow travellers of Masood had suspected him, as Muzaffar says Masood was

in person on 27 December 1922 and 4 January 1923 The relevant facts which emerge from Ali Shah's statement as given in these letters are as follows

Syed Masud Ali Shah was in one of the Muhajir batches which crossed from Afghanistan into Soviet Russia in September 1920 He was in Tashkent Military School between February to April 1921 He returned to India via Persia on 15 December 1921 He again left India in June 1922 and reached Moscow in July 1922 travelling by land route via Tehran In Tehran he contacted Capt Rankine

On 21 August he left Moscow for Berlin and on 13 September he saw Major Green at Wilhelmstrasse who directed him to Major Folly (?), through whom he received on 14 October a telegram from India remitting one hundred pounds

From Berlin he returned to Moscow where he attended the 4th Congress of the CI (5 November to 5 December 1922) In Moscow he was to be contacted by someone as the contact failed he contacted the British Mission on 27 December 1922 He produced before the official of the same delegate cards for the 4th Congress of the CI and for the Congress of the Young Communist International issued in his own name He (Ali Shah) told official that his identification word was "Bellmount" and he referred to "his relations with Col Kaye"

By the time Ali Shah contacted the British Mission in Moscow a second time on 4 January 1922 the official had transmitted the facts given by Ali Shah to the British intelligence official in Berlin who in an unnumbered telegram dated 4 January 1922 confirmed all these facts

In his second visit Ali Shah told the official that Roy had instructed him either to stay in Moscow or to return to India with a group of Indians which was going back via Persia But Ali Shah was keen on going to Berlin where he said a conference of Indian communists called by Roy was to meet His difficulty was that on the Persian passport supplied to him through Roy the German consulate in Moscow was refusing him visa That is why Ali Shah had contacted the British Mission a second time

The most revealing thing are the handwritten remarks by Lt Col Cecil Kaye (Director Central Intelligence Government of India) in which Kaye expresses his dissatisfaction that Ali Shah's real name is mentioned in files He adds Ali Shah is already a suspect among Roy's followers and hopes that he (Ali Shah) is able to get away (from Moscow) before the suspicion becomes a certainty

not arrested when he came back *sometime* in 1921 and went back to Moscow in 1922. Usmani in a letter to Roy dated 15 February 1923 refers to Ali Shah thus: "They (imperialists and bourgeoisie) send lackeys, henchmen in our organisation... They come in guise of Mustafa Saghirs, Ali Sahaks, Roys and R. Bhattacharyas... These plague germs must be butchered... and ruthlessly. No compromise. No mercy..." This was Exhibit No. 43 in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case and was quoted in part in the Sessions Court judgement and Usmani has given a lengthier quotation from the same in his unpublished autobiography from which we have quoted above.

That Masood went back to Moscow again in 1922 *is known to us from three sources:* (1) *Nalini Gupta's statement to the police dated 27 December 1923* (*N.A I*, *quoted* earlier), (2) Cecil Kaye's account in *Communism in India,* 1924-27, page 19, (3) photostat of India Office papers quoted by Muzaffar Ahmad. Nalini Gupta says: "I met only Ali Shah who returned to Berlin from India via Persia and Moscow after I was there. I learnt from him that he visited Bengal and other parts of India and got into touch with several Congress leaders and labour agitators." He *says* further: "The Indians who attended the Congress (*Fourth Congress of CI,* 5 *November to* 5 *December* 1922—G A.) are myself, Ali Shah, M. N. Roy and *two delegates* who came from India (?) and belonged to the Ghadr Party." According to India Office papers, Masood was simultaneously keeping in touch with British intelligence officers both in Moscow and Berlin in 1922 These papers are as a communication addressed to Lord Curzon who was foreign secretary only up to the end of 1923. Now Cecil Kaye *states* that "Roy had received letters from India *denouncing Masood as a spy*". *This is quite correct. We have quoted* Usmani's letter to Roy. But did Roy take action on this information? We think he did not and Cecil Kaye's account that "Masood was arrested and imprisoned and later managed to escape" etc. seems to be totally false Muzaffar also does not believe it.

From 1922 onwards we do not have any *record of Ali Shah's movements till 1925 end. Towards the end of 1925*

S. V. Ghate recalls that Masood Ali Shah contacted him and told him he had just come from abroad and showed him a brief identification letter signed by Evelyn Roy written on his cuffsleeve on the inside. The communication said that he should be taken to the Kanpur Conference which was to be held at the end of December 1925 and to which Ghate was preparing to go. Ghate suspected him but because of the letter, which he identified, he asked him to accompany him to Kanpur and to be at the station at the appointed time. Ghate says, Masood did not turn up and he did not hear of him till after one year or more. In 1926 Masood Ali Shah again sought out Ghate and met him somewhere in the open and insisted on talking to Ghate, who did not want to do anything with him. But Masood would not leave him and said: "I must tell you about myself. My father is a great friend of Petigara who was then DIG, CID and had asked me to do what he (Petigara) tells me. That is how I got into this." This is the gist of what Masood told him in 1926, Ghate recalls. Ghate says, he informed this to leading comrades and to Usmani after he came out of jail in 1927.

Shaukat Usmani would probably deny that he got this information from Ghate before he decided to go with M. Shafiq, Habib Ahmad and Ali Shah to Moscow in the beginning of 1928. But even if Usmani had kept in mind the full significance of what he had himself written to Roy about Ali Shah in 1923 he would not have launched on that journey. Usmani, in his latest unpublished autobiographical manuscript, does criticise himself for undertaking that journey and says he protested to Shafiq about Masood Ali Shah's being included in the team and even threatened to withdraw, but finally agreed to go accepting a milder version of Ali Shah's doings in the past which Shafiq gave whitewashing Ali Shah's real role. Let us quote Shaukat Usmani's own words:

"If I do not criticise and expose myself here, I would be doing a great deal of harm to the young revolutionaries. I fell in a bad trap. Shafiq pinned me down in a very awkward position. He inflicted the news that Masood Ali Shah would be accompanying us. I was aghast with amaze-

ment. I told him plainly that I would far better drop out... I said, I would not go with Masood Ali Shah who had darkened his past. But Shafiq disagreed with me and Habib supported him that Ali Shah was not at fault; it was M. N. Roy's instructions he had carried out in whatever he had done."

When Usmani argued, "Why go with a man who was not welcome at Moscow", Shafiq explained, "*it was for the purposes of rehabilitating him with Moscow and exposing Roy*". Usmani says: "I fell in against my will" because he thought "the safe trip would vindicate Shah and fulfil my long cherished desire to go back to Moscow".

He concludes: "Yes, I should be frank enough to state that I was wiong. I ought to have given up this trip for a better occasion. But what they call destiny was working against me and sun of reputation had to set. My downward course began with this agreement. I was in an eclipse which had to take a long time to clear" (p. 190).

Shaukat Usmani gives a scrappy account of his own experiences at the Sixth World Congress, who were all the Indian delegates, what happened to Masood Ali Shah and his other companions, what talk he had with Comintern leaders befoie he left. But the following facts are recorded by him in his unpublished work quoted above:

(1) Their journey commenced in June 1928 through Iran and they reached Moscow just on the eve of the opening of the Congress on 17 July 1928.

(2) "Shafiq, Habib Ahmad and myself who had prison terms to our credit were selected as... delegates to the congress... I was pushed into the presidium of the Comintern Congress and found myself seated third from Stalin."[8]

(3) "Shafiq and Habib kept their word in handing over Masood Ali Shah to the Soviet. I do not know Ali Shah fared well or bad... He had violated the Soviet law during previous visit in 1923 (?) and he had admitted himself as such. Different rumours about his fate prevailed during our Meerut trial. I do not know anything about their truth or otherwise" (p. 190).

8 Also quoted in his pamphlet

(4) He had two private interviews one with Bukharin and another with Stalin. He says, he communicated to them the message of Indian revolutionaries (terrorists) who wanted help for their "actions" to "blow up" the Simon Commission while it was touring India. Reply in both the cases was obviously negative; Bukharin told him "to inform the revolutionaries to desist individual acts and prepare for mass actions" (p. 194).

(5) Usmani writes, he "was offered a seat on the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The seat was to be temporary till the consent of the comrades from India was obtained. I knew that the comrades who had opposed my going away would vehemently oppose such a move... hence refused the offer. ...I proposed to return. I was advised not to take such a step" (p. 194).

A little further, Usmani writes: "There were some chances of my remaining on the Executive of the Communist International... one gentleman (S. N. Tagore) from Bengal in Moscow vehemently opposed my being elected to the EC and because of this opposition organised by him, I was offered a temporary seat on the Executive Committee which I refused to accept and preferred to come back" (p. 209).

"One gentleman (S. N. Tagore)" is Saumyendra Nath Tagore, who as we had mentioned ealier was a delegate with consultative vote at the Sixth Congress and whose speech at the same is reported in *Inprecor* under the pseudonym "Narayana". Usmani never mentioned this fact in his autobiography.

About the election of two members of the CPI to the ECCI Muzaffar Ahmad says this in his *CPI—Years of Formation, 1921-1933*:

"We learnt while our Central Committee was meeting[9] that at the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International two of our party members were elected as alternative members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International This matter was also discussed in the

9 In December 1928 at the time of the conference of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party.

meeting of our Central Committee. It was decided to send one of these two members to the headquarters of the Communist International. But before anything could be arranged, the Meerut event descended upon us" (p. 28).

Muzaffar does not give the names of the two members elected to the ECCI as alternate members nor does he say if Usmani was one of them. Ghate cannot recall this at all. It is not recorded for obvious reasons. But this generally confirms Usmani's information. Muzaffar who accuses Usmani and his colleagues of going to Moscow with forged credentials says the same thing about Saumyendra Nath Tagore, who was in Moscow already six months before the Sixth Congress began:

"Saumyendra Nath had a genuine passport but his credential letter was dubious, for the signatory to it never knew anything about it, let alone signing it" (*The CPI and its Formation Abroad*, pp. 167-68).

But Muzaffar himself had sent him enough credentials which "helped him a great deal at the international level":

"In November, 1927, the tenth anniversary of the Russian revolution was celebrated... The Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal had an invitation sent on behalf of the Russian Rural Cooperatives. On my suggestion the Party sent a wire intimating that Saumyendra Nath Tagore would participate in the celebrations as the representative of our party, which he did.

"On March 31, 1928, the third conference of the Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal was held at Bhatpara, a big jute mill area. It was mentioned in the report to the conference that the party's General Secretary, Saumyendra Nath Tagore was touring Europe in order to study the working-class movement. All this kind of thing helped him a great deal on the international plane" (*Ibid.*, p. 164)

Muzaffar says: "...in spite of whatever we did for his sake, he did not truly have the right to be our representative". He points out inaccuracies in "his address to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International". He reports that "the representatives of the Communist International began a lengthy and exhaustive discussion with him regarding the movement in India and the problems of party-

building. They asked him to return to India and report back to the party the discussions that had taken place" (*Ibid.*, pp. 165-66).

S. N. Tagore did not return till after six years or more. He got the opportunity to study in the International Lenin School but did not make good use of it. On his return to India in 1934, S. N. Tagore wrote a book *Hitlerism or Aryan Rule in Germany* in which he stated "that the reasons for Hitler's emergence were the treachery of the German Social-Democrats and the 'fatal' error of the Communist Party of Germany". Comrade Abdul Halim criticised this approach of the book, namely the criticism of the Communist Party of Germany, in terms of the understanding of the Comintern then It was after this difference of opinion that S. N. Tagore left the Communist Party of India.

Muzaffar has written all this about S N. Tagore in a sharp criticism of the latter's booklet, *Historical Development of the Communist Movement in India* in the last chapter of his book *CPI and Its Formation Abroad.* Like Shaukat Usmani, S N. Tagore was a delegate at the Sixth Comintern Congress without a proper authorisation from the party.

Shaukat Usmani returned immediately, surrendered to the party, admitted his mistake and began to work under the party, was arrested and heavily sentenced in the Meerut Case. It was only at the end of 1932 when he read Shafiq's letter that his mind was unhinged and he began to act erratically and in an antiparty way in jail and that is how he came to be removed from the party.

But S. N. Tagore did not return immediately as he was asked to do, but only after five or six years. He found no urge to take his place in the front of struggle which was raging then in India in 1928 and in the early thirties. After his return he left the party and his booklet mentioned above is an essay in antiparty slander under the guise of historical notes.

If Shaukat Usmani went to Moscow and became a delegate to the Sixth Congress without party permission or authorisation, the same is not entirely the case as far as S. N. Tagore is concerned and Muzaffar must bear at least partly the responsibility for his being elected as a delegate.

In the Meerut Case Records there are 18 letters addressed by S N Tagore to Muzaffar and three by the latter to the former The correspondence passed between them in the period from January 1927 to November 1928 As we have pointed out above, Muzaffar himself admits that the various credentials sent to S N Tagore, who was then the General Secretary of the Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party, by him at the former's request "helped him (S N Tagore) considerably on the international plane" So it is not surprising that S N Tagore was elected as a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the CI in these circumstances, when it was extremely difficult for Indian communists to get out of the country Here was a General Secretary of a Provincial WPP, a member of the CPI and even a member of the CEC of that Party and with letters and credentials from one of the leading CEC members of the CPI Muzaffar has least reason to be surprised that S N Tagore was elected as a delegate to the World Congress The congress opened on 17 July 1928 S N Tagore made his contribution to the discussions sometime in August 1928 These things were not immediately known in India in these days But in September 1928 Muzaffar must have known that the congress had opened

In a letter dated 8 September 1928 Muzaffar Ahmad is writing to S N Tagore, among other things, the following I hear that four or five men from India have gone to Europe If they attempt to join any labour movement there on our behalf enter a strong protest in our names There is plenty of work to be done in India They have gone abroad to do mischief of the four men one is of a very suspicious character That is not unknown in labour circles in Europe" (Meerut Records, P 1865 (T))

This is an extract from the police translations of the original Bengali letter sent by Muzaffar Ahmad from Bombay The police may have kept a photo copy and let the original go as they used to do, in order to get more letters as evidence

In this case S N Tagore may have received it some time after the session ended (1 September 1928)—and this may be the reason why he opposed Usmani's being nominated as an alternate member to the ECCI This may or may not be

true, but that is not the point we want to stress This reference once again shows that Muzaffar is wanting S N Tagore to act as the accredited representative of the CPI with the CI authorities It is needless to labour the point any further Muzaffar himself admits "My conduct vis a is Saumyendra Nath Tagore has been faulty, it was the conduct of a goody-goody person, not of a revolutionary" (*CPI and Its Formation Abroad*, p 163)

Such is the story of the Indian delegation to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern The speeches of the six delegates, three with decisive vote and three with consultative vote, are reported in summary form in the issues of the *Inprecor* from 25 July 1928 to 21 November 1928 There are seven interventions to the credit of Sikandar Sur, i e Shaukat Usmani, three to that of Raza i e Mohammad Shafiq, two to that of Narayana, i e Saumyendra Nath Tagore, and one each to the credit of Mahmud (Mohammad Ali—Sipassi), Clemens P Dutt and G A K Luhani Shaukat Usmani, as stated earlier, was elected to the presidium and as its member he made a greetings' speech to the assembled delegates at the opening (*Inprecor*, Vol VIII, No 39, dated 25 July 1928), he made a co-report to Kuusinen's report on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semicolonies, and he made a declaration at the conclusion of the debate on the above report (*Inprecor*, 4 October 1928 and 21 November 1928)

The plenary session of the Sixth Congress concluded on 1 September 1928 but the Editorial Commissions set up for the finalisation of the programme, the basic reports and theses continued functioning thereafter For instance, the *Programme of the CI* was published in English in *Inprecor* dated 25 November 1928 which also published the *Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the CI* The *Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semicolonies* was published on 25 December 1928 This last document, briefly known as the Colonial Thesis of the Sixth Congress', so important for Indian communists in as much as it gave an integrated analysis of the strategy and tactics of the national movement in dependent countries was not available in full text to Indian communists till the early

months of 1929 Extracts from the same where references were made to India were however put before the Calcutta Central Committee meeting (December end 1928) by the writer of this article, who had arrived from Berlin at the beginning of December 1928

As stated earlier M. N. Roy was not in Moscow when the preparations for Sixth Congress were going on Both the interim report on India quoted earlier as well as the draft "Colonial Thesis" and Kuusinen's report on the same were drawn up without his participation On the eve of the congress he appeared to have sent to the congress a lengthy document incorporating his views In the debate on the draft Colonial Thesis" and Kuusinen's report the socalled theory of "decolonisation" attributed to M. N Roy came up for sharp criticism and repudiation This referred to the view often expressed by Roy in his writings that in the industrialisation in India after the First World War, imperialism was making concessions to an influential section of Indian industrial bourgeoisie and drawing it into a joint partnership with British imperialism Such an exaggerated estimation of the imperialists' allowing the development of some industries for their war-purposes could lead to both reformist as well as sectarian deviations—to adventurist overestimation of the role of the proletariat on the one hand and to the oversimplified perspective of capturing the National Congress by petty bourgeois revolutionary elements The official history of the Communist International says that some delegates at the congress held this wrong view about the "decolonising" role of imperialism and decided that it was necessary to unmask this chatter of the imperialists and their lackeys about their policy of "decolonisation" The theses adopted maintained that "imperialists hinder the industrialisation of colonies and prevent the full development of its productive forces" (p 349)

Reviewing the perspective of the revolutionary developments in China, India and in other oppressed colonies, the congress stated that the revolutionary movement in these countries was in the bourgeois democratic stage and the bourgeois democratic revolution in the colonies was

directly linked up with their freedom struggle against imperialist yoke.

The official history further states, that both in the discussion and in the theses, considerable time and space were given to the role of the bourgeoisie in the national-liberation struggle. It was stated in the theses that the national bourgeoisie of the colonial countries does not adopt a uniform attitude towards imperialism. A section of the bourgeoisie serves directly the interests of imperialism and takes up antinational and proimperialist position. "The remaining portions of the native bourgeoisie, especially the portion reflecting the interests of the native industry, support the national movement and represent a special vacillating, compromising tendency which may be designated as *national reformism* (or in the terminology of the theses of the Second Congress of the CI, a bourgeois-democratic tendency)" (*Revolutionary Movement in Colonies and Semicolonies*, London, 1929, Modern Books Ltd., p. 24).

The congress warned that an underestimation of bourgeois national reformism, which is distinct from the imperialist-feudal camp and exerts influence on the mass of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and partly also on the working class, could lead to the isolation of the communists from the masses of the working people. It is stated in the theses that: "On the other hand, however, the demonstrations of the bourgeois opposition against the ruling imperialist-feudal bloc, even if they do not have any deep foundation, can exert a certain *accelerating* influence on the process of the political awakening of the wide masses of the toilers; the concrete open conflicts of the national-reformist bourgeisie with imperialism, although of little significance in themselves, may under certain conditions, indirectly serve as the cause of the unleashing of even greater revolutionary mass actions" (*Ibid.*, p. 31).

The official history of the Comintern also points to certain wrong and contradictory formulations in the colonial theses which led to sectarian mistakes:

"At the same time the theses contained some wrong and

contradictory appraisals of the strategy and tactics of the national-liberation movement and about the role of the national bourgeoisie Although the resolutions of the con gress made a distinction between bourgeois national reformism and the imperialist-feudal camp, its general esti- mate of the role of the national bourgeoisie bore a sectarian character For instance it has been stated in the course of the theses that The national bourgeoisie has not the signi- ficance of a force in the struggle against imeprialism' (*Ibid* page 31) Further they proposed that it was 'necessary to reject the formation of any kind of bloc between the Com munist Party and the nationalist-reformist opposition' (*Ibid*, p 33)

'Later, O W Kuusinen, speaking at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, had stated that the appraisal of the role of the national bourgeoisie of the colonial and semicolonial countries made at the Sixth Congress 'bore a certain slant towards sectarianism'" (*The Communist International—A Short Historical Outline*, German edition, Berlin, 1970, pp 344-45)

Before we conclude with the account of the unsuccessful attempts to send a delegation from India to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (1935) which was the last congress before its dissolution in 1943, we will deal with certain developments and events in the period be tween the Sixth and the Seventh World Congresses, both in India and in the International which throw light on the question of the affiliation of the CPI to the CI

In the debate on the Colonial Thesis at the Sixth Congress, not only the "theory of decolonisation" attributed to M N Roy was sharply criticised but also Roy by name In the debate it appears that the British delegation (CPGB) was accused of taking a stand which amounted to a support to the theory of decolonisation There is a declaration of the British delegation on the theses on the colonial question which is on record (see *Inprecor*, Vol VIII No 91, dated 22 December 1928) in which the accusation is repudiated as baseless, and it is said that the 'delegation has decided to vote against the acceptance as a basis of the theses moved by Comrade Kuusinen" The delegation further-

more tabled an amendment to the theses which it requested to be voted upon at the congress.

The Indian delegation, as it appears from their speeches recorded in the *Inprecor*, took their stand not only against the theory of decolonisation but supported in general the draft colonial theses presented by Kuusinen Roy's organisational work in the outgoing ECCI does not seem to have come up for discussion at the congress. He was not elected to the new ECCI on political grounds. India got two seats on the ECCI and two names were proposed as recorded by Muzaffar, but he does not say what those two names were. M. N. Roy was not expelled at that time. He remained a member of the party and continued to function in Berlin under the CP of Germany.

Roy's articles continued to appear in the Inprecor after the congress was concluded on 1 September 1928, up to March 1929. His article on "The Indian Constitution" appeared in Vol. VIII, No. 54 of 24 August 1928, on "The Indian National Congress" appeared in No. 91 of 27 December 1928, i e. on the eve of the Calcutta session. His articles in 1929 published in *Inprecor*, i e. in Volume IX, are as follows:

1. "The Ways of the Indian Revolution", No. 4, 18 January 1929.
2. "Counter-revolution in Afghanistan", No. 5, 25 January 1929.
3. "The Conference of Workers' and Peasants' Party of India" (i e. on the AIWPP Conference held in Calcutta at the end of December 1928), No. 6, 1 February 1929.
4. "The Heroic Struggle of the Indian Proletariat", No. 8, 15 February 1929.
5. "The Bourgeoisie and the National Revolution in India", No. 9, 22 February 1929.
6. "Indian Communists in the Election Struggle" (Re Muncipal election in Bombay, February 1929), No. 12, 1 March 1929.

Thereafter *Inprecor* ceased to carry any more articles by M. N. Roy. On 25 March 1929 *Inprecor* (Vol IX, No. 16) carried one article by Paul Schubin on the same theme of

the AIWPP Conference held at Calcutta, in which "Comrade Roy" was criticised. Paul Schubin was applying the Sixth World Congress line in appraising the results of the First AIWPP Conference. Roy was being criticised for tailing behind the Congress and the Independence League, the line taken at the AIWPP Conference was supported, the criticism of the Independence League made at the conference as well as the offer of united front with the Independence League made there was welcomed.

After *Inprecor* stopped publishing Roy's articles, he (Roy) came out openly with his alliance with the rightist opposition of Brandler and Thalheimer in the German Communist Party and began to contribute openly to their press. Thus it was that at the tenth plenum of the ECCI, M. N. Roy came in for sharp criticism. He was accused of pursuing "the opportunist policy of a bloc with national bourgeoisie" and "contributing to the press of Brandlerite renegades". It was stated at this plenum that "M. N. Roy had placed himself outside the pale of the International" (*Inprecor*, Vol. IX, No. 40, dated 20 August 1929).

EVENTS BETWEEN SIXTH AND SEVENTH CONGRESSES

At Calcutta at the end of December 1928 when the AIWPP Conference met, there was no question of implementing the line and the decisions of the Sixth World Congress. Only extracts referring to India from the Colonial Thesis of the Sixth Congress became known towards the end. The *Inprecor* article on the AIWPP Conference referred to above criticised Indian communists for not having concretised the slogan of complete independence in a sufficiently revolutionary way. The AIWPP Conference in its resolution called for an Independent Democratic Socialist Republic. The demonstration which the conference led to the Congress pandal bore the banner "Long Live the Socialist Soviet Republic" but the resolution of the AIWPP Conference did not give a call for setting up Soviets. Leaders were "lagging behind the consciousness of the masses"—was the implication of the criticism!

But at the CEC meeting at Calcutta it was noted that the Sixth Congress of the CI had stated with reference to India, that the workers' and peasants' parties were two-class organisations, it could be a bloc which communists form with revolutionary and democratic elements in the national movements to galvanise the same but they could not replace the Communist Party. "So the congress set before the Indian communists as the most important task the unification of all communist groups and the creation of an independent and centralised party" (*The Communist International*, p. 345). What was emphasised, as quoted above, was the strengthening of the party as a mass Communist Party, as a centralised and organised mass force. It is interesting to note that the same official history records that on the eve of the Sixth World Congress the process of the formation of the communist movement in the East was characterised by the increasing political maturity and the organised nature of the labour movement. Concretising this the official history of the Communist International states:

"In December 1925 the foundation conference of the legal Communist Party of India took place, in April 1925 the foundation conference of the Communist Party of Korea met and in the same year the first Marxist organisations in Indonesia were formed" (*Ibid.*, pp. 341-42).

At Calcutta, the Indian communist leaders discussed the question of putting the Indian party on a sound organisational footing and subsequently some steps were taken to implement the collective advice of the Sixth World Congress. For instance we have in the Meerut Records a Draft Constitution of the Communist Party of India (1929) (Prosecution Exhibit, P 476/7).

This (draft) Constitution differs from the earlier constitutions which we have referred to in three respects. The present draft defines the Communist Party of India as a section of the Communist International.[10] Secondly, it calls for organisation of fractions not only in the trade unions

10 And states as its ultimate object the establishment of socialism ... the siezure of power by the working class and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in accordance with the programme of the Communist International.

but also in the workers' and peasants' parties and in the National Congress. Thirdly, it contains, word for word, the same article on the "Foreign Bureau" contained in the previous constitutions which we have quoted earlier.

The clear-cut and principled definition of the party and its objective set forth in this draft means that the party is to be organised and to function illegally. Secondly, it is demarcated from the WPP while it organised the same as its legal forum and also works inside the National Congress. Thirdly, the retention of the article on "Foreign Bureau", and the fact as stated by Muzaffar that the Sixth Congress had allotted two seats on the ECCI to India and the Calcutta meeting had decided to send one leading comrade for the work, meant that an attempt was to be made to reorganise the machinery to keep in contact with the CI in place of the one manned by Roy. This was now for the first time to be realistically based on the Indian party organisation, which had now become a sizable mass political force in the working-class and national-liberation movement of the country.

But the British imperialists had also taken note of this last fact and they struck at the party by a countrywide arrest of the leadership of the party for the famous Meerut Conspiracy Case and this organisational work and the work of applying the general line of the Sixth World Congress to Indian conditions was disrupted When the task was taken up a little later, the left-sectarian slant inherent in the guidelines of the "Colonial Thesis" of the Sixth World Congress, coupled with the inexperience of the young leadership which came forward to shoulder the burden in the face of severe repression against the working class and the party, landed the party in a position in which it kept away from the great national struggle of 1930 launched by Mahatma Gandhi.

"The struggle launched by Mahatma Gandhi was not revolutionary, it was anti-imperialist and democratic in content though its technique surely sought to limit mass action. All the same, it set vast masses into motion and infused in them the spirit of national revolution. Our opposition to it not only isolated the party from the national

movement but also led to a split in our mass trade unions which were already facing the combined offensive of victimisation and police repression after the Meerut arrests. We were virtually out of the Congress and tried to form an Anti-imperialist League as a rival organisation The central trade-union organisation had two successive splits leaving the rump of a Red TUC in our hands Our party itself split, though temporarily" (*Communist Party and India's Path to National Regeneration and Socialism*, by G Adhikari, p 65)

It was from 1933 that party began correcting its course and taking steps to reunify its ranks But it would be wrong to conclude that it was all bleak in the years between 1929 and 1933 as far as the party was concerned The period immediately following the Meerut arrests was a period of strike struggles of textile and railway workers Workers were defending themselves against the offensive of wage-cuts and retrenchment which the capitalists had launched to shift the burden of the depression of the early thirties on to the shoulders of the workers Imperialists had launched massive repression against militant trade unionists Despite this repression, working-class cadres were being trained. Young Workers' Leagues were formed Communist Party was taking root among the workers—in the Red-Flag-minded working-class mass base created by the upsurge of 1927-28

Imperialist strategy was to crush the upsurge of militant working-class struggles led by the communists which preceded the national movement of 1930, to denounce the former as antinational and as instigated from abroad and thus to drive a wedge between the two The incorrect tactics of the party in those days—adventurism in the trade-union field, sectarianism and self-isolation from the national struggle—came handy to the imperialists to attack the two forces one by one

The basic policy of the party at that time was reflected in the *Workers' Weekly*—which was the party's central organ and appeared from January 1930 to June 1930 when it was suppressed It was reflected in the *Draft Platform of Action of the CPI* which was prepared in the latter part of 1930, first published in *Inprecor*, Vol X, No 58 dated

16 December 1930 and distributed at the time of the Karachi session of the National Congress (March 1931) in two or three languages

At Karachi, when the Congress leadership had withdrawn the struggle, to enable Mahatma Gandhi to go to the Round Table Conference and where the leftwing was mobilising against compromise and was demanding a more radical programme and an intensification of struggle, the Draft Platform had a good reception among the left Its call against compromise, its radical anti-imperialist and antilandlord programme, its perspective of peasant struggles, general strike and armed uprising were in tune with the radical left sentiments

But the Draft Platform, taking the sectarian slant of the Sixth World Congress 'Colonial Thesis" to its logical conclusion, had put forward a programme and strategy which could not enable the party and the working class to play an effective role in the national independence struggle but only isolate it from the same It equated "complete independence" to the setting up of a Soviet power and the proclamation of the Indian Federation of Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republics It had denounced the national bourgeoisie as counter revolutionary, as virtually gone over to the camp of imperialism and denied the fact that it was participating in the anti imperialist struggle

After the failure of the Second Round Table Conference the national struggle was again resumed In certain parts of the country under its impact the peasant masses were galvanised—struggle was spreading in the vast countryside Though the national leadership was seeking to curb the movement, to keep it within the bounds of nonviolent satyagraha, the leftwing elements and the fighting masses were surging forward to raise the tempo of the movement A peasant upheaval seemed to gather momentum The fact that the party and the trade union movement were split at such a crucial moment became a matter of great concern to the communist leadership inside the Meerut jail and also to the international communist movement

At that time, in 1932, the communists in the Meerut Conspiracy Case had converted the prisoners' dock into a tri-

bune of fullfledged anti-imperialist working-class propaganda, explaining the role and the policy of the Communist Party in building a united militant trade-union movement, fighting peasant organisations and in revolutionising the national independence movement. Though the statements of individual communist leaders and their joint general statement were guided by the "Colonial Thesis" of the Sixth World Congress and the Draft Platform (December 1930), the keynote of their court declarations was the fight for uniting the working class in militant trade unions, for building anti-imperialist front by working inside the National Congress to fight reformism, compromise and to revolutionise the national independence movement. It is with this outlook that the communist leaders made every effort possible from inside jail to unify the party outside They studied the party documents relating to the split and formulated their proposals for uniting the party on a principled basis for discharging the abovenamed tasks.[11] However, much could not be achieved till most of the leaders were released, i e till towards the end of 1933 and the beginning of 1934.

The concern of the Communist International was expressed in the joint open letter of the CPs of China, Great Britain and Germany (*Inprecor*, Vol. XII, No. 22, 19 May 1932) and later in the open letter of the CC of the Communist Party of China (*Inprecor*, Vol. XIII, No 51, 24 November 1933). They were a help to the released communist leaders in their efforts to restore the unity of the party. At the beginning of 1934 the party was unified by the setting up of a new provisional CC and on the basis of the Draft Political Theses which summated the experience of the struggles and adopted the demands of the *Draft Platform of Action* as its programme.

The reunified Communist Party, despite its temporary weakness, had quickly shown its capacity to bring about the unity and revival of militant working-class organisations and activity. The textile general strikes of Bombay and

11. The Calcutta Committee of the party took the initiative in early 1933 to circularise a statement to all the communist units to come together and settle the differences and to restore the unity of the all-India Communist Party.

Sholapur in the spring of 1934 as well as the revival of TU activity in other industrial centres were significant proofs. Simultaneously the party was struggling to find its bearing and role in the national liberation movement. The civil disobedience movement being finally withdrawn in May 1934 and the jail delivery begun, the leftwing cadres of the National Congress were raising the questions: Why was the revolutionary upsurge of the thirties allowed to peter out? How to harness the revolutionary energy of the masses for the overthrow of the imperialist rule? These cadres as well as those of the 'terrorist' movement were turning to scientific socialism and to workers' and peasants' class organisations. The Communist Party was opening a dialogue with the newly formed Congress Socialist Party as well as with the "terrorist" groups.

There emerged the possibility of the Communist Party acting as the focus of the newly emerging mass leftward swing. The British imperialists foresaw this possibility before even the party itself was properly aware of it. They launched another round of repression in April-May 1934. Communist leaders and cadres who could be got hold of were arrested and put under detention without trial all over the country. Within two months, i.e. by July 1934, the Communist Party and all the allied mass organisations were banned and declared illegal.

The blow was struck before the task of unification was completed, before the organisation was set up, which would ensure the functioning of the illegal party centre and units and the organisation of open work in the mass organisations. The Draft Political Theses of the provisional CC had given the slogan of building the anti-imperialist united front. The practical implementation of this slogan required a redefinition of the attitude towards the National Congress. The workers' and peasants' parties had in the intervening period ceased to exist. The Congress Socialist Party and other left parties had arisen under noncommunist leadership. Problems of united front with them to build united militant trade union and kisan organisations and a left wing inside the Congress had to be solved.

In the international field, in the context of the great eco-

nomic crisis and the depression of 1929 and the early thirties, Hitler fascism had emerged in Germany temporarily suppressing the working class under brutal and bloody repression. Imperialist offensive against the working class and the oppressed peoples was being intensified. To counter this offensive, a united working-class front was being forged. The Red International of Trade Unions (RILU) was again opening negotiations with the reformist International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) for joint action to defend working-class living standards. While at the same time unity of action was being forged at the bottom, in factories and in strike struggles. Popular fronts were being formed to block the path of fascism in countries where it had not yet succeeded. The policy of class against class was being replaced by the policy of united front of the working-class and democratic forces against fascism and imperialism. The preparations for the convening of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern which was to finalise the policy of united antifascist front were under way.

It was at this time, sometime in the latter half of 1934 that the batch of Ghadar Party cadres, young Indian emigrants from California, Panama, Mexico, who had gone to Moscow's University of the People's of the East, for training, had begun to trickle back into India illegally. One of the earliest to come back thus was Teja Singh Swatantar,[12] who probably had toured round the Indian emigrant centres in the USA and Latin America and had sent selected Ghadar Party cadres for training in the Moscow Communist University. On his arrival in Bombay he contacted the underground party centre, at that time manned by S. S. Mirajkar. Swatantar had brought with him the message that the Seventh Congress of the CI was scheduled to meet in the late summer or autumn of 1935 and the Indian party should make preparations to send a delegation to the same with reports.

The party centre decided that (late) S V Deshpande, S S. Mirajkar and Santosh Kapur should form the dele-

12 He was preceded by (late) Iqbal Singh Hundal who returned illegally to Bombay early in 1934.

gation and make the necessary arrangements to leave the country secretly According to the information supplied by S S Mirajkar, the first to leave India secretly was S V. Deshpande which he did in December 1934 He was followed by S S Mirajkar himself and Santoshi Kapur on 21 January 1935 Towards the end of March 1935, the Indian daily press announced that S V Deshpande and S S Mirajkar were arrested in Singapore and brought back to Bombay According to the account of Mirajkar, the contact arrangement planned for Singapore did not function They waited for two months Santoshi returned to India safely, but Mirajkar and Deshpande who continued to wait were spotted accidentally by a police agent who had known Mirajkar in the Meerut case and this led to their arrest The whole story will be told in the memoirs which Mirajkar is now engaged in preparing for the press Both of them were set free after being brought to Bombay as no criminal case could be made against them but after two months or so they were arrested under the Preventive Detention Act and taken to Ahmednagar and detained there for over two years until the Congress ministries came to office some months after the General Election of February 1937

SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE CI
25 July to 21 August 1935

According to the official history of the CI, 76 Communist Parties and international mass organisations were affiliated to the Communist International at that time At the congress itself 513 delegates were present They represented 65 Communist Parties and a number of international mass organisations Among the delegates from the Communist Parties of colonial and dependent countries were Ho Chi Minh (Indochina), Khaled Bagdash (Syria), Wang Ming (China) No delegate from India was present at the congress

The Seventh Congress was the last congress of the Comintern before it was dissolved in 1943 The congress worked out the strategic and tactical line of building the broad antifascist people's front and of building the anti imperialist front to fight the forces of fascist aggression, intensifying

colonial oppression and of war which were raising their head in the context of the great economic crisis of the early thirties. Actually the Seventh Congress did much more. It initiated a new orientation in the policy and the general line, in the strategy and tactics and in the organisational set-up of the Communist International. This new orientation and its determined implementation by the Communist Parties of the world in the succeeding years made the international communist movement a world force fighting against imperialism and capitalism and war, for socialism and for the independence of nations, for world peace and brotherhood of nations.

The new orientation enabled the Communist Parties to become a progressive national force in their respective countries. This new orientation initiated a new organisational pattern for the world body, according to which the task of the leadership at the world level was restricted to collectively working out the common tasks and line, which all the parties have to carry out in the struggle for the freedom of the peoples, for world peace, for democracy and socialism; while each party is independent and autonomous, working out the line and tasks of revolutionary advance in its own country applying the common ideology and the common general line in terms of the specific concrete situation there.

The problems of the national-liberation struggle in the colonies and dependent countries were not put forward as a specific item on the agenda. But in terms of the new orientation of the general strategic and tactical line of the International, important conclusions inevitably emerged for the national-liberation movement. In formulating the line of the anti-imperialist united front, the line of uniting all who are capable of taking a stand against imperialism, including the national bourgeoisie whose contradictions with imperialism were sharpening, a sharp break had to be made with sectarian conceptions and habits. This was emphasised at the congress:

"The determination of the character of the revolution which was developing and maturing in the colonies and

dependent countries became a task of the greatest importance for the destiny of the national liberation movement.

"The Seventh Congress rejected the left-sectarian formulation that the revolution in the colonial countries has only a bourgeois-democratic character and rapidly grows over into a socialist one. The representatives of the Communist Parties of the colonial and dependent countries emphasised at the congress that the slogans of 'the workers' and peasants' revolution and of a 'Soviet government' formulated earlier were premature for most of these countries and meant an underestimation of the general national and anti-imperialist tasks.

"It was decided at the congress that for the majority of these colonies and semicolonies, the first step of a real popular revolution would be a national-liberation struggle against the imperialist oppressor.

'To fight against the mounting imperialist exploitation of the country, against the cruel enslavement of the people, to fight to drive out the imperialists and secure the independence of the country. This was now the main tasks of the Communist Parties in the colonies and semicolonies, formulated in the resolution on the main report of Dimitrov, adopted at the congress.' (*The Communist International*, German edition, p. 473.)

The Communist Party of India had already put forward the slogan of an anti-imperialist front in its Draft Political Theses of December 1933 (published in *Communist*, Vol. I, No. 1, January 1934, and in an abridged form in *Inprecor*, Vol. XIV, No. 40, dated 20 July 1934). But as pointed out earlier, this document had put forward the slogan of "Soviet republic of workers and peasants" and had demanded as a part of the programme for national independence "the confiscation of all factories, banks, mines and plantations" removing the qualifying words 'belonging to British imperialists' contained in the earlier *Draft Platform of Action of the CPI* (December 1930). With such narrow conceptions a broad anti imperialist front including the national bourgeoisie could not be formed, nor could the controversy regarding the attitude towards the Indian National Congress be solved. These difficulties were solved in the course

of discussion of the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the CI and the struggle to apply the same to the concrete conditions of the country. In the beginning of 1936 the Party published two documents—*On the Anti-imperialist United Front* and *The United National Front.* A new leaf was turned in the life of the party and in the succeeding years of struggles leading to the independence of the country it became a significant national political force.

QUESTION OF AFFILIATION TO THE COMINTERN

In concluding this rather long and discursive paper on the Indian delegations at the various congresses of the Communist International it would not be out of place to put together all the facts and statements known to us on the question of the affiliation of the CPI to the Communist International—a question which is inseparable from the main theme of this paper. At the outset let us quote what has been stated on this question in the latest official history of the Comintern:

"In India the communist movement was practically deprived of the central leadership between 1925 to 1933. All the members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India were in jail. In 1933 an important step for the unification of the Indian communists was taken, a new Central Committee was elected, which took over the all-India leadership in its hands. *In the same year the Indian Communist Party became a member of the Communist International*" (*Ibid.*, p. 388; emphasis added).

The statement that the CPI was affiliated to the CI for the first time in 1933 is made by the authoritative editorial board of the book, presumably on the basis of the records of the CI. This is rather puzzling and appears contradictory to the references (though indirect) to the same question made in international documents earlier. Let us recite the facts and references to the subject chronologically.

In 1920 at the time of the Second Congress, the Indian delegates, apart from M. N. Roy who was listed as a delegate with a mandate from the CP of Mexico, were not listed

as delegates of the CPI which did not exist then. Abani Mukherji was listed as a left socialist and M. P. B. T. Acharya as representing Indian Revolutionary Association (Tashkent?).

In 1921 at the Third Congress M. N. Roy was listed as a delegate from the CPI which was formed in Tashkent. Was it on the basis of temporary affiliation?

In 1922 at the Fourth Congress, we have the following stated in the report of the credential committee submitted to the congress:

"The CP of India cannot represent a definite membership since its work is entirely illegal. Four delegates were invited, one has come and has been admitted to the congress with the right to vote" (*Inprecor*, Vol. II, No. 112, dated 14 December 1922).

It appears from the published records seen by us that M. N. Roy spoke there on the theses of the Eastern Question as a delegate of the CPI—no longer of the party formed in Tashkent but on the basis of the party in India.

Report of the ECCI presented to the Fourth Congress of the CI states the following:

"We have had valuable results in India. I can communicate to the congress that the work of our comrades during the past few months has been crowned with success Comrade Roy with a group of friends is issuing a periodical whose task is to smoothen our way in India" (*Inprecor*, Vol. II, No. 106, dated 2 December 1922).

The periodical referred to is obviously *The Vanguard of Indian Independence* issued by M. N. Roy from abroad from 15 May 1922. It is noteworthy that this fortnightly, from 15 February 1923 when its first issue of Vol. II was published, appeared under the changed title of *The Vanguard* under which was written: Central Organ of the Communist Party of India (Sec. of the Communist International).

The journal continued to appear under this title and this legend below it up to 1 December 1923, i.e. up to Vol. III, No 8. The first anniversary number of 15 May 1923 carried a message of greetings signed by the presidium of the Communist International. The succeeding issues from 15 December 1923 onwards again reverted to the original title of *The*

Vanguard of Indian Independence and the words "Central Organ" etc were omitted. The journal continued up to the end of 1924 and was replaced by *The Masses of India* which began to appear from 1 January 1925 as a monthly.

It carried on the front page a congratulatory telegram signed by "the President of the Communist International". In winding up the session of the Fourth Congress, Zinoviev, President of the CI, refers to the "creation of a nucleus of Communist Party in India" which has been already quoted earlier.

Besides, at the Fourth Congress M N. Roy was elected to the new ECCI (from India) (*Inprecor,* Vol II, No. 118, dated 30 December 1922)

At the Fifth Congress in 1924 we have two delegates from India—M. N. Roy and Mohammad Ali, with decisive vote. Roy was elected to the presidium of the Fifth Congress of the CI (*Inprecor,* Vol IV, No 43, dated 18 July 1924). This reference states that on the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the first imperialist war, an antiwar appeal signed by M. N. Roy, a member of the presidium, was issued. A statement condemning the sentences on the communists in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case was read out at the 18th session of the Fifth Congress (*Inprecor,* Vol IV, No 50, dated 25 July 1924) In the same number it is stated that "India had two decisive votes and 10 mandates granted at the Fifth Congress. Roy was elected to the ECCI He was also made a candidate member of the presidium"

All this goes to show that at the Third as well as at the Fourth and Fifth Congresses the CPI though a small party was treated practically as an affiliated party. At the Third Congress it seems to be affiliated on the basis of the CPI formed at Tashkent while at the Fourth and Fifth Congresses it is on the basis of the party formed in India itself.

Between the Fifth and Sixth Congresses, i.e. between 1924 and July 1928, there were five sessions of the ECCI, viz from the fifth to the ninth. In all these sessions and between them M. N. Roy functioned as a member of the ECCI and sometimes was the chairman of the Eastern

Commission At the Fifth session of the ECCI there was a resolution on India in the Colonial Commission (*Inprecor*, Vol V, No 39, dated 28 April 1925) We have not seen the text But India figures in the report—"The Communist International between the Fifth and Sixth World Congresses"—which was "a report on the position in all the sections of the World Communist Party" and included reports up to March 1926 The report was prepared for the Sixth Congress It contained a section on India from which we have quoted This report, which was prepared without the participation of M N Roy and after evaluating the position in India independently, made the following statements

(1) "The problem of the organisation of a genuine Communist Party as the vanguard of the proletariat which must be the leader of the national revolution is still to be solved"

(2) "Simultaneously with the attempt to form a legal Communist Party there appeared in the various provinces a number of workers' and peasants' parties"

(3) "It is clearly out of question that the Workers' and Peasants' Party should be substitute for the Communist Party, the organisation of which is absolutely necessary"

(4) "The class-consciousness, good organisation and self-sacrificing spirit of the working class in India manifest in the present strike struggle make one confident that the Indian proletariat—has correctly appreciated the role of the Indian bourgeoisie, which has descended to the depths of a shameful capitulation before imperialism and has understood its tasks as the leader of a million strong peasantry in the new stage of the revolution This means that the proletariat of India will build up, and has already begun to do so, its Communist Party, whose leadership will guarantee victory"

This report cannot be interpreted to mean that the CPI—though small—which "has already begun to build up" was not then affiliated Otherwise how do we explain that at the Sixth Congress delegates who had come from India were admitted to the congress and one even elected to the presidium? That it was proved later that they had no mandate from the party in India as was communicated by the

party later does not alter the situation regarding the affiliation.

The "Colonial Thesis" adopted at the Sixth Congress defined the tasks of the Indian communists as:

"The union of all communist groups and individual communists scattered throughout the country into single, independent and centralised party represents the first task of Indian communists. While rejecting the principle of the building of the party on a two-class basis, the communists must utilise the connections of the existing workers' and peasants' parties with the toiling masses for strengthening their own party, bearing in mind that the hegemony of the proletariat cannot be realised without the existence of a consolidated, steadfast Communist Party armed with the theory of Marxism" (pp 51-52).

This paragraph contains in a concentrated form the same ideas which were contained in the interim report from which we have just quoted. The stress is on the point that "the communists (Indian) must utilise the connections of the existing workers' and peasants' parties with the toiling masses for strengthening *their own party*..." This para formed part of the extracts from the "Colonial Thesis" which were before the meeting of the CC of the CPI which met in Calcutta at the end of December 1928, at the time of All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference. The decision to strengthen the organisation of the party functioning illegally taken at this meeting found its reflection in the 1929 draft of the Constitution of the CPI. Here, as distinct from the earlier Constitution of the Party, the CPI is described as the "section of the Communist International".

In December 1930 *The Draft Platform of Action of the CPI* appeared first in the *Inprecor*, dated 18 December 1930, and was printed in Indian languages and distributed in March 1931 at the Karachi Congress This also carried the title "CPI—section of the Communist International".

In 1932, the Meerut prisoners' communist group in their general statement did make the following assertion: "Our party, the Communist Party of India, was not at the time of our arrest duly affiliated to the Communist International, and we were not all members of any Communist Party. But

nevertheless we fully subscribe to the system of thought and the well-thought-out and scientific political programme laid down for the world revolution, by that most powerful world-wide revolutionary organisation, the Communist International' (*Communists Challenge Imperialism from the Dock*, NBA, 1967, p 2)

Such a statement, also made in the individual statements of all communists in the case, was made for legal tactical reasons to avoid technically pleading guilty of the 'conspiracy" alleged by the prosecution and which centred on the Communist International, to get the chance to boldly defend all the policies and activities, to expose the imperialist attack and to propagate from the dock the policies and programme of the CPI

Now it is true that a provisional CEC of the CPI was reformed at the end of December 1928, after some of the communist leaders were released from Meerut jail, and this CEC adopted Draft Political Theses based on the *Draft Platform* and on the statements of the Meerut accused In the beginning of 1934 on the basis of this draft, initiative was taken to heal the party split that had taken place in 1932 and to reunify the party The documents of the CEC, namely the 'Draft Constitution" and the abridged "Draft Political Theses" were published in the *Inprecor* on 11 May 1934 and 20 July 1934 respectively

We do not know on the basis of what archival and documentary evidence the authoritative editorial board of the official history of the CI has made the statement that the CPI became a member of that world body only in 1933 or more accurately in 1934 after the Provisional CC was formed

That is why we have summarised above all the facts and documents known to us, from 1921 to 1934 From these two conclusions emerge

(1) At the Third (1921), Fourth (1922) and the Fifth (1924) congresses of the CI, the CPI was considered an affiliated Communist Party, first on the basis of the emigre party organisation formed abroad, i e Tashkent, and later on the basis of the all India nucleus of the CPI formed in India itself

(2) After the formation of the party at the end of 1925, after the First Communist Conference at Kanpur, when the first CEC was formed and the first Party Constitution was framed, we have documentary evidence of efforts being made to get the party in India making a formal application for being affiliated to the CI and as a result of these efforts the para on 'Foreign Bureau" appears in the Party Constitution of 1927 and 1929. At the Sixth Congress delegates from India were treated as delegates from an affiliated party. It is true that in January 1934 when Bradley, on his release from Meerut Case, left India, he carried with him and to the International centre all the papers of the Provisional CC meeting (December 1933) and about the subsequent unification of the party. Relevant documents of the Indian party were subsequently published in *Inprecor,* but the Indian CP did not consider that event as an act of affiliation to CI, but only as a renewal of old links of affiliation.

United Front Experience

Satya Pal Dang

With the split in the Congress and with no party in the country in a position to get absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, besides a similar position in most of the states, the question of united front of left and democratic parties has assumed heightened importance and urgency Much controversy and discussion about it are going on in the country The breakup of the united fronts in Kerala and Bengal, in both of which the Communist Party (Marxist) was the strongest component, has added new dimensions to this controversy and discussion

One cannot reach a correct understanding about this question and its various aspects, if one discusses it in isolated form, instead of in the context of the strategic tasks of the revolutionary forces in the present stage of the revolution Any policy formulated keeping in view some immediate gains and without regard to the longterm interests of the revolutionary movement is likely to prove both wrong and harmful in the long run

It is generally not a point of disagreement amongst those who claim to be Marxists that the present stage of revolution in India is not socialist The tasks of the democratic

revolution have yet to be completed. Imperialism, remnants of feudalism, and monopoly capital are the main hindrances today in the way of rapid development of India's productive forces. Revolution is to be carried out against them and not against the Indian bourgeosie as a whole. These class forces—monopoly, feudalism and imperialism (foreign monopoly capital)—are the class enemies to be fought, vanquished and eliminated in the present stage of the revolution. Obviously the working class *alone* cannot carry out this task. It needs allies. All those classes or sections of classes whose objective interests will be served by the revolution can become allies. The strategic task therefore is to build a *united front of such classes and to isolate the main enemy* to successfully carry out the revolution.

The working class is destined to play a decisive role in building such a united front. Worker-peasant alliance will be its basis. National bourgeoisie—the nonmonopoly sections—can and must be drawn into this front. Building of the front is a complex process. It involves a struggle to achieve unity of the working class itself and to build worker-peasant alliance. It involves the task of working class and its party coming forward to champion and to support the objective interest of middle classes and the national bourgeoisie in so far as they are directed against monopoly, feudalism and imperialism. It involves the task of supporting their struggles for such interests and of fighting for the same. It means a policy of unity as well as struggle towards the national bourgeoisie and the kulaks. The united front has to be antiimperialist, antifeudal and antimonopoly.

PARTY AND CLASS

It may be said that all this is simple and elementary. Yet, sometimes even those who claim to be hardened revolutionaries in the country fail to draw correct conclusions from it and instead draw obviously wrong conclusions. Obviously, for any stage of the revolution, the question of the main enemy, of firm allies, of vacillating allies, of components of the united front necessary to carry out the revolution have to be in terms of *classes* and not of *political*

parties Of course, classes operate through political parties and a political party in the last analysis represents the interests of some class or the other It will be sheer moon shine to imagine that all the class *forces—from* working class to the national bourgeoisie, objectively interested in the antimonopoly, antifeudal, anti imperialist revolution—can be or will be rallied under the banner of the Communist Party The strategic unity needed to carry out and complete the present stage of the revolution will therefore take the organisational shape of united front of political parties, groups, mass organisations, etc representing one or other of the *classes objectively interested in the revolution* Thus *it is obviously wrong and absurd to raise the slogan of united front of classes instead of and against a united front of parties* as was recently done by some of the leaders of the Communist Party (Marxist) Such a slogan in fact amounts to giving up the slogan of united front It represents gross sectarianism and can only lead to complete isolation of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class

At the same time, one has to remember that sometimes the character of a political party can undergo even far reaching changes as a result of a split, etc *or some other* developments It is therefore wrong to *work out one's strategy for the entire period on the basis of a particular* political party *being the main enemy* without regard to the alignment of the class forces at any particular time The banner of blind anti Congressism first unfurled by the late Ram Manohar Lohia and taken up also by the Communist Party (Marxist) is not a revolutionary banner The slogan of *uniting even with the devil* against the Congress was neither correct when it was first raised nor is it correct to day Such a slogan hinders the task of raising the anti imperialist, antifeudal and antimonopoly consciousness of the people and of building their unity on the basis of such consciousness It is this slogan which is landing today the SSP and the CPM in the Janasangh Syndicate Swatantra bandwagon Again it is because of this slogan that in the current land movement the SSP has chosen as its targets not the big farm of Birlas the big landlords etc but farms of leaders of Congress (R) even when they happen to be

as small as four-acre farms and thereby actually harming the land occupation movement.

LEADING ROLE

Coming back to the antimonopoly, antifeudal, anti-imperialist strategic united front, one must take note of a vital point of difference between the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party (Marxist) regarding the leadership of this front Such a front cannot come into existence without the working class and the worker-peasant alliance having a very important—even decisive—place in it, without that the revolution cannot be carried out, the tasks of the revolution cannot be completed At the same time, the CPI visualises the possibility of such a front coming into existence without the working class having acquired *exclusive* leadership of the same. CPM denies such a possibility and puts forward the slogan of a people's democratic front with working class exercising exclusive leadership within the front.

The position of the CPM is somewhat analagous to the position the united Communist Party took during the period of British rule in India. The Communist Party then believed and propagated that India's freedom could not be achieved unless the working class came to occupy the position of exclusive leadership of the national movement. The result of this sectarian and wrong slogan and the practice following from it, instead of helping the working class to acquire the leadership—even a key position—isolated it considerably.

The result of the wrong understanding of the CPM cannot be very different today. It is not at all a question of CPM wanting exclusive working-class leadership and the CPI not wanting the same. To pose the question in this manner is to make mockery of Marxism. If it were a question of "wanting" and "having", why not "want" socialist revolution here and now? There is enough experience in the history of the communist movement in India to learn that if one underestimates the potentiality of the role of classes other than the working class, the results that follow are quite negative for the

working class and its communist vanguard as well as for the cause of the revolution.

One more question needs to be considered in relation to the united front needed to carry out the antimonopoly, anti-feudal, anti-imperialist revolution. In the course of carrying out the tasks of the revolution, differences are bound to arise within the front on many questions, including the speed and the extent of the thoroughness with which these measures are to be carried out for clearing the way for socialism. Struggle within the united front is inevitable. It should however be obvious that the working class must carry out this struggle within the united front in such a manner as not to jeopardise the unity necessary to carry out the task of the revolution. Through a correct policy of unity and struggle, the weight of the working class within the front will increase and changes in the front may also take place, but at the proper time. Any attempt on the part of the party which claims to be the vanguard of the working class to dictate to all others and to demand of them obedience and subordination in the name of having the right to "lead" can only result in the breakup of the front, isolation of the working class from its allies whose role is not yet exhausted and even split within the working class Such a situation can only benefit the enemy and must not be allowed to arise.

ELECTORAL ALLIANCES

Having discussed some aspects of the strategic united front needed to carry out and complete the present stage of revolution, let us now come to the question of electoral alliances (united fronts) in connection with elections to state assemblies and for formation of governments in states if and when possible—an issue which is not only very much a subject of hot discussion and controversy in the country but which is also a matter of much concern in view of the negative experience in Kerala as well as in Bengal.

It should not at all be difficult to understand that in today's concrete situation of India, it would be wrong and even suicidal for any revolutionary party to keep out of the electoral battles and to boycott the elections Such a policy,

instead of serving the cause of revolution, would only isolate the revolutionary forces from its potential allies. Not only that. It would also be incorrect in today's situation to adopt a policy of entering the legislatures with the idea of not forming any government even if such a possibility is there. The correct tactics is to ensure maximum possible representation of left and democratic parties in the state assemblies and of forming governments of such parties if and when such possibility offers itself. Except for the Naxalites, all the left and democratic parties in the country are agreed on this, even though reasons may be different in different cases.

'When the united Congress had the monopoly of power throughout the country and used it to develop capitalism in India leading to emergence and strengthening of the monopolies, the left and democratic parties were agreed on the necessity of breaking this monopoly and reducing the Congress strength as much as possible. At the same time there were serious differences CPI held fast to the view that the question of electoral alliances and united fronts must not be considered in isolation from the strategic tasks in the present stage of the revolution, that long-term interests of the cause of the revolution must not be lost sight of and sacrificed for any immediate gains. The CPI therefore advocated the necessity of forming united fronts in the states of left and democratic parties on the basis of minimum programmes, progressive programmes Only such tactics in relation to the elections could help to mobilise masses and also to raise their antimonopoly, antifeudal and anti-imperialist consciousness Only such tactics would help people to go forward in the direction of strategic united front necessary at the present stage of the revolution.

The CPI opposed the Lohia thesis of united front of all anti-Congress parties—from Jana Sangh to communists. Such a thesis obviously could not raise the political consciousness of the people, could not help them to understand their class enemies, allies, etc. Such a thesis whatever its merits from the viewpoint of some immediate gains went counter to the entire strategy of the revolution. The CPM too adopted the same thesis except for the states in which it considered the formation of alternative governments a practical possi-

bility And Kerala was only the state in which, according to the CPM, this possibility existed in 1967. Apart from the fact that the CPM estimate about many other states turned out to be wrong, the subsequent developments in the country—including the functioning of the 1967 non-Congress governments in UP, Bihar, etc, split in the Congress on all-India basis etc—have sufficiently proved the incorrectness of the Lohia thesis

GOVERNMENTS IN 1967

A question can be asked as to why the CPI joined the governments in Bihar, UP and Punjab in which the Jana Sangh too was a party The concrete situation that had arisen in these states after the 1967 election must be kept in view Prior to the election, efforts of the CPI to build programme based united fronts of left and democratic parties in these states had not succeeded except partially and that also too late in Punjab, while the CPI popularised its concept of UF during the election campaign, the other left parties particularly the CPM and the SSP popularised the Lohia thesis of blind anti-Congressism

After the election a situation arose in these three states in which either all non Congress parties had to come together or the Congress would have succeeded in forming governments with the help of defectors etc thus reversing the verdict of the people The sentiment of the masses was "Anyone or any combination but Congress'—a sentiment strengthened by SSP and CPM Any party taking the onus of letting the Congress come back to power by refusing to be in an anti-Congress government with Jana Sangh would have heavily lost It would have been a case of running too far ahead of the consciousness of the masses at a crucial moment and thereby losing one's capacity to change and raise that consciousness It was necessary to help the people to learn *from experience* the futility of the Lohia slogan The CPI therefore joined the governments together with Jana Sangh but without compromising any principle The fronts in the assemblies for forming these governments adopted policies which were in accordance with the CPI

policies and contrary to the policies of the Jana Sangh. The CPI made clear to the people as to why it had joined these governments. The reactionary and disruptive role of the Jana Sangh within the fronts was never sought to be covered up but exposed concretely and fully. The CPI knew that the parting of the ways would come soon and it did not hesitate to come out of the government in UP when the situation was ripe for it. The midterm elections held in February 1969 conclusively proved that the people did learn from their experience and as a result thereof the Jana Sangh emerged considerably weaker and not stronger

It must be mentioned that the situation that arose in these states was not inevitable at least in Bihar and Punjab. A programme-based united front of left and democratic parties in Bihar and a similar front of left parties and the then Sant Akali Dal in Punjab would have come into existence if the SSP in Bihar and the CPM in Punjab had adopted correct tactics as advocated by the CPI instead of the Lohia thesis. And there cannot be the least doubt today that both these fronts would have won majorities in their respective state assemblies and been in a position to form non-Congress progressive governments without any parties of right reaction.

UNITED FRONT CRACKUP

One of the main reasons which prevented the formation of a single united front of all the left and democratic parties in Bengal in connection with the 1967 election was the serious difference of opinion between the left parties regarding the question of attitude towards the Bangla Congress. The CPI and some other left parties considered this party as one which should be brought into the programme-based progressive united front, as one which represented the upper middle class and a section of the bourgeoisie. The CPM and its supporter parties on the other hand condemned Bangla Congress as being as bad and reactionary as the Congress. They advocated a policy of no truck with it and even cited CPI's evaluation of this party—a breakaway from the Congress—as yet another proof of its being an

was the CPM that was mainly responsible for the breakup. In both the states, a number of parties which had originally been with the CPM had shifted their stand and stood on the "other side" when differences became sharp ultimately resulting in the breakups.

Any serious study of the events and developments leading to these breakups would show that they were in the main the result of the differences over two matters:

Firstly, the purpose and aims of forming the UF governments within the present bourgeois Constitution of India.

Secondly, the question of relationship that should exist between the various parties constituting the fronts.

CPM believed that it was destined to be the "leader" in these fronts, that to act as the "leader" was its right as well as its duty, that other parties in the fronts must accept it as the "leader" and act in accordance with its dictates. Anybody who would not do so and demanded equal position, anybody who wanted differences to be resolved by fraternal friendly discussions was branded revisionist. The CPM believed that it was its "revolutionary" duty to pursue tactics that would strengthen it at the cost of other parties in the fronts.

Any number of examples from its conduct as well as the utterances of its leaders have been and can be quoted to prove that the CPM was having this grossly sectarian understanding. Uncalled for interference in the work of the departments held by CPI and other ministers, refusal to call a meeting of the coordinating committee, insistence that this committee in Kerala should have only one convener belonging to the CPM, misuse of the labour department to weaken the unions led by the parties other than the CPM, the demand in Kerala that the decisions of Namboodiripad should be final since he was the chief minister and refusal in Bengal to concede that the chief minister had any special position amongst the ministers, the misuse of the police against other parties in the front, etc. —are only some such instances.

Such conduct on the part of the CPM—the strongest amongst the components of the UF—could not but lead to more and more disruption within the two fronts and also

could only make more difficult the longterm task of building the strategic UF on the national plane instead of facilitating it.

POSSIBILITY OF ADVANCE

The CPM again had sectarian understanding with regard to the aim and purpose of forming and participating in state governments which had to function within the framework of a bourgeois constitution. Undoubtedly, the basic aim must be to strengthen the revolution, to raise the political and class consciousness of the masses, to facilitate the task of building the antimonopoly, antifeudal, and antiimperialist strategic UF. The question however is: How, precisely? The CPI believed that it was not correct that nothing could be done for the people under the present bourgeois constitution, that with the help of powerful mass movement a good deal could be done. It also took note of the fact that the masses in general too had this understanding, that unless whatever was possible was done, big sections of the people would become demoralised and lose faith and that the vanguard of the working class would get isolated instead of emerging stronger.

The CPI further believed that only by doing for the people whatever was possible and by making them see through actual experience what could not be done, it would be possible to make more and more people realise the limitations of the bourgeois constitution.

The CPM on the other hand believed that nothing much was possible, that any attempt in that direction would only sow illusions amongst the masses and was therefore wrong, that the main thing was to use the state governments to wreck the constitution. It was this wrong understanding of the CPM because of which there were repeated attempts to bring about artificial confrontations with the centre. It was the same understanding of the CPM because of which the record of the Namboodiripad ministry in the matter of implementing the minimum programme of the UF was dismal. In actual practice, instead of advancing the revolution, the CPM only succeeded in widening the

gulf between the working class and its such potential allies as the middle classes

IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE

Given the above understanding about the aim of participation in ministries and mutual relationship between the front partners it was not surprising that the CPM went to the extent of indulging in favouritism and nepotism in the matter of appointments of using questionable methods and misusing official position to collect funds for the party and of even making deals with vested interests—all in the name of strengthening the CPM the only revolutionary party—and thereby advancing the revolution Such practices on the part of the CPM in power could not advance but only retard and did retard the cause of the revolution

Recent utterances of A K Gopalan and some other leaders of the CPM show that no lesson has been learnt by the CPM and that it intends to continue pursuing its sectarian and disruptive policies In fact the recent resolution of the Central Committee of the CPM virtually branding the CPI and the Congress (R) as the main enemies its readiness to strike deals with the Syndicate etc as in Kerala clearly show that it is going to be even more disruptive than hitherto

The lesson is obvious that it is not possible to build the united front without a bitter *ideological struggle* against the wrong theoretical positions of the CPM besides building unity in action through mass struggles whenever that is possible An ideological struggle is necessary not only in relation to the wrong ideology of the CPM It is also necessary in relation to the SSP The policy of the dominant leadership of the SSP helps directly and openly the Jana sangh Syndicate Swatantra combination and the forces behind them Such has been its role in the current land occupation movement

Another important aspect has to be kept in view A mutually agreed minimum progressive programme on a state level is considerably easier to arrive at amongst all the traditional left parties than at the all India level This is so

because of differences regarding foreign policy etc which in turn are because of the proimperialist and anti-Soviet stand which the SSP and some other left parties often take. It is high time that these differences are debated upon by the people as much as possible, that there is *ideological* confrontation between the different left parties

This ideological struggle however must be carried on keeping in view that the aim is to make the ranks of these parties realise the real character of the policies pursued by their leaders, how they weaken the left and serve the reaction, so that the ranks assert themselves and make their leaders either to change or to step aside

United Front in the Struggle Against Monopoly Capital and War

Chitta Biswas

After experiencing the horrors of two world wars in one generation, the natural question that is agitating the minds of millions of people all over the world is Whether or not a third world war is inevitable?

Is it possible, they ask, to prevent the outbreak of another world war, when all efforts failed to halt of the mad drive for war by the German imperialists? Is it not an illusion to think that the US imperialists, who are a hundred times stronger than the German imperialists, can be prevented from unleashing the third world war? Is it not futile to talk of peace when a series of local wars are being waged by the US imperialists?

The question of war and peace is therefore no longer a matter of academic debate or discussion The realities of life force us to face this question squarely

In order to find an answer to this complicated question, it is necessary to go into the causes of war, to trace the historical background of the international developments, the correlation of forces—both positive and negative—that existed before the two world wars and to examine the various factors that led to the outbreak of the two world

wars. It is essential to attempt an objective analysis of the international situation as it developed after the second world war, the forces that are operating—both for and against the war—in order to find a possible answer to the question.

The Marxist approach to the question of war and peace is determined by class approach. Proceeding from the correct analysis of history, communists tried to bring home to others that war is the creation of imperialism which Lenin described as the highest stage of capitalism. It is therefore necessary to analyse the trend of presentday imperialism or domination of finance capital which has attained a new height as a result of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism and the unprecedented concentration and centralisation of capital. The trusts and cartels of the monopolies have pooled together into giant corporations. The influence of the financial oligarchies, which combined industrial capital with banking capital, is growing. They are invading all spheres of economic life of captalist countries and are dictating the state policies of imperialist countries. The evergrowing tendency of monopoly capital to switch over to the arms industries has resulted on the one hand in the aggravation of international tension, and on the other in increasing hardships for the masses living in the imperialist countries.

INTER-IMPERIALIST CONTRADICTIONS

But the development of capitalism and the flourishing of the "various finance-capitalist groupings and industrial powers take place at uneven rates, according to the historical conditions and stage in each case, and does not correspond at any moment to the existing division of the world, reflecting the consequences of a previous stage of development. Hence arises sharpening economic conflict against the barriers of monopolist control, culminating in the endeavour to batter through the barriers by military force. This is the central dynamic of imperialism and of imperialist war" (R. Palme Dutt, *World Politics, 1918-1936*).

One of the characteristic features of imperialism has

always been to attempt at resolving internal contradictions by military force and war Apart from the two world wars unleashed by imperialism within the first four decades of this century, the imperialist powers have been responsible for conducting several other wars—the Boer war the Russo Japanese war, the two Balkan wars, Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the imperialist occupation of Peking the series of armed conflicts in the years 1905 1908 and 1911 prior to the first world war, and for waging 55 local wars since 1945

The process of uneven economic and political development—which accentuates the contradictions among imperialist countries—forces a particular imperialist power or a group of powers, who might unite for a temporary period to serve their particular interests, "to suppress other countries and crowd them out of the world markets, thereby creating the precondition for military clashes", as Lenin puts it

The situation prior to the first world war was marked by this growing clash of interests among the imperialist powers Britain dominated the major part of the world by extracting the wealth and resources from the chain of colonies, next was France in her colonial possessions, Germany—which was a comparatively more developed capitalist country with her increasing rate of production and technological development while Britain was lagging behind in spite of her unlimited resources exploited from the colonies—did not have the proportionate share of the colonies The "central dynamic of imperialism" was reflected in the rapidly growing contradictions of the imperialist countries—between Germany on one side and Britain and France on the other

Explaining this contradiction, Lenin said

" opposed to this, mainly Anglo-French group, we have another group of capitalists, an even more rapacious, even more predatory one, a group who came to the capitalist banqueting table when all the seats were occupied, but who introduced into the struggle new methods for developing capitalist production, improved techniques, and superior organisation, which turned the old capitalism, the capital-

ism of the free competition age into capitalism of giant trusts syndicates and cartels This group introduced the beginnings of state controlled capitalist production, combining the colossal power of capitalism with the colossal power of the state into a single mechanism and bringing tens of millions of people within the single organisation of state capitalism Here is economic history, here is diplomatic history, covering several decades, from which no one can get away It is the one and only guide-post to a proper solution of the problem of war it leads you to the conclusion that the present war, too, is the outcome of the policies of the classes who have come to grips in it, of the two supreme giants, who, long before the war, had caught the whole world, all countries, in the net of financial exploitation and economically divided the globe up among themselves They were bound to clash, because a redivision of this supremacy, from the point of view of capitalism, had become inevitable" ("War and Revolution", *Collected Works* Vol 24, pp 403 4)

So, in their bid for a redivision of the world into their spheres of supremacy, the imperialist powers did clash There was no escape from the 'inevitable" The laws of capitalist development, however, provide no formula for permanent resolution of the capitalistic antagonism The first world war, therefore, could not resolve their differences, antagonism and contradictions On the contrary, after a brief pause, the interimperialist contradictions manifested in a diversified manner and a number of new contradictions developed Germany was stripped of her colonies lost her rich coal and iron resources, heavy burden of war debts was put on her shoulder by the victor powers Germany was defeated and humiliated She wanted breathing time to take revenge for the inglorious defeat

CONTRADICTION BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

In the intervening period, contradiction between labour and capital sharpened in the capitalist countries and in the colonies national-liberation movement started taking shape

In the advanced metropolitan countries and in some of the colonial strongholds of the imperial powers, communist parties appeared as important factors in the national life with the Communist International as the advanced detachment of the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie. The capitalist system of production alternately cycled between ups and downs, as a result of inherent crisis of capitalism, culminating in the general depression of 1929. The general crisis of capitalism began.

The most important contradiction of the period following the first world war was that of two diametrically opposite social systems. So long capitalism suffered from its own internal or interimperialist contradictions. After the victory of the October Revolution capitalism was confronted with the challenge of an entirely different social system, where capitalist exploitation and the drive for profit by the bourgeoisie are eliminated once and for all. The October Socialist Revolution unleashed the revolutionary forces of the working class against the bourgeoisie. Capitalism was confronted with the challenge of a superior social system. For the first time in history, working class became the master of its destiny on one-sixth of the globe, took over the means of production and converted the workers Soviets into the organs of state power by smashing the bourgeois state machinery. A new civilisation was born, a new era was ushered in, a new phenomenon in world politics emerged. The world was thus divided into two social systems—capitalism and socialism. The course of history was diverted. In addition to the internal contradictions of capitalism an external contradiction was added after the first world war.

The bourgeoisie became alert and conscious of the impending danger. In spite of their own antagonisms, they quickly united to destroy the new Soviet state, only to find their efforts fail miserably in the face of the fierce resistance of the determined working class and working people of Soviet Russia under the leadership of Lenin. But they did not give up their attempts to crush the Soviet Union. They picked up Germany as their potential ally for launching a crusade against the Soviet Union.

RISE AND CONSOLIDATION OF FASCISM ENCOURAGED

Germany was already whipping up national chauvinism with a view to rousing the whole nation to avenge the defeat of the first world war Offensive against the German working class was unleashed Frantic efforts to recover the colonies, which were snatched away from her by the victorious imperialist powers, were being made by the German ruling circles

In a statement Hitler said in 1931 that his party refuses to give up its claim over former German colonies We do not deny the importance overseas colonies may have for resettling and for supplying our economy with colonial products and raw materials On no account are we rejecting possible colonial acquisitions in the future, since this would serve the above aims" Hitler demanded the colonies back from Britain, France and Belgium His eyes were also on the Portuguese colonies He wanted the colonial possessions back from Japan He wanted to colonise, what he called, the "German East" which he described as the "extension of the state territory beyond the present eastern imperial frontier" He intended to annex the Ukraine too

And in all his efforts the imperialist bloc, particularly the Anglo-French group aided by US imperialism, gave all assistance Within three years of his coming to power, Hitler received economic assistance to the tune of £150 million for rearming the German forces The imperialists did not try to conceal their purpose Lloyd George, foremost spokesman of the western imperialist powers declared in a speech in the House of Commons of 28 November 1934 'In a very short time, perhaps in a year or two, the conservative elements in this country will be looking to Germany as the bulwark against communism in Europe . the Germans could make a better job of it than any other country Do not let us be in a hurry to condemn Germany We shall be welcoming Germany as our friend"

This collaboration with Germany started in a calculated manner Hitler, a shrewd politician tried to bargain alternately with Britain and France and also separately using

the "Bolshevik bogy" to gain the maximum benefit for Germany. And the British and French imperialists, obsessed by the growing strength and consolidation of the socialist Soviet Union, continued to appease Hitler even to the extent of allowing him to annex the territories of some of the East-European countries. The appeasement of Hitler and fascism by the western imperialists emboldened the German fascists to go ahead with their plan of unleashing the second world war.

Hitler already established close ties with his counterparts, Mussolini in Italy and Tojo in Japan, who aligned together in that notorious "anti-Comintern pact". Ruthless suppression of the working-class movement and communist parties revealed the ugly face of fascism Hitler was given the final green signal for unleashing the war by the shameless betrayal of the western powers at Munich.

WARNING BY COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The communist movement warned the working class, and the people at large, against the dangerous implications and farreaching consequences resulting from the rise of fascism to power. The Sixth and especially Seventh Congresses of the Communist International devoted considerable attention in their deliberations to the various aspects of the danger of the rise and consolidation of fascist dictatorship. The thirteenth plenum of the Executive Committee of the CI characterised fascism as "the open terrorist-dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital". Dimitrov said: "German fascism is acting as the spearhead of international counter-revolution, as the chief instigator of imperialist war, as the initiator of crusade against the Soviet Union, the great fatherland of the working people of the whole world."

The CI exposed the expansionist designs of German fascism as follows. "The adventurist plans of the German fascists are very farreaching and count on a war of revenge against France, dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, annexation of Austria, destruction of the independence of the Baltic

states which they are striving to convert into a base for attack on the Soviet Union and the wresting of the Soviet Ukraine from the USSR They are demanding colonies and are endeavouring to arouse moods in favour of a world war for a new repartition of the world

Proceeding from a profound Marxist Leninist analysis of class relations the CI made this prophetic forecast which later proved to be hundred per cent correct German fascism dragged the whole world to the catastrophe of the second world war

The second world war could not be averted In spite of repeated appeals by the communist movement the social democrats blinded by anticommunism refused collaboration against fascism to cooperation with communists The western powers used Hitler as their gendarme The working class movement too had its weakness in so far as it could not build up a powerful united front of the antiwar forces

US IMPERIALISM EMERGES AS LEADER OF IMPERIALIST CAMP

The second world war ended with the victory over fascism Millions sacrificed their lives properties worth billions were destroyed Cities and villages were levelled to the ground The cost of victory over fascism was incalculable The whole world now yearned for peace—no more war and no more devastation no more killing and destruction

But the protagonists of monopoly capitalism care little for the people Their class interest is supreme in their mind and that is the only guide to all actions of monopoly capital Monopoly capitalism cannot survive without war and militarism

The conspiracy against the Soviet Union was being hatched by the then ringleader of the British imperialism Sir Winston Churchill even when the British government forced by the course of events was fighting as part of the allied powers against the axis powers This was revealed from his secret message to the military command in the latter

part of the second world war And in the postwar period, he was the first to initiate the cold war with the infamous Fulton speech where he first used the term "iron curtain" borrowed from Goebbels, who had used it for the first time only a year before.

But Britain emerged as the second grade power after the second world war. US imperialists took over the leadership of the imperialist camp US imperialism suffered little and earned fabulous profits from the two world wars During the five years of the second world war alone US monopoly capitalists earned a profit of 107 4 billion dollars whereas their average profit from 1936 to 1939 amounted to 5 4 billion dollars per annum In the first five years after the war the profit increased further and reached the figure of 154 5 billion dollars The assets of Pentagon are steadily increasing In 1967 they were 183,600 million dollars, which accounted for 53 per cent of the total assets of the US government.

US ARMS INDUSTRIES FLOURISH

The noteworthy feature of US economy is that it is increasingly being geared to rapid militarisation programme Military supplies in aircraft industry account for 91 per cent, in shipbuilding industry 61 per cent, and in radio-electronic industry 40 per cent

The arms industries in the United States are so profitable a business that US monopoly sharks shudder at the very idea of disarmament. The US publicist Norman Thomas brilliantly describes the psychological makeup of the vested interests connected with arms production in the USA In his book *The Prerequisites for Peace*, he says "Many powerful groups of Americans have so great a stake in the arms race that consciously or instinctively they reject the idea of total disarmament the generals, who have a vested interest in their profession, prestige and income, the scientists in their research funds and investigations, and the stockholders and managers of countless corporations in the profits they derive from their business and connection with the Defence Department, the world's biggest single customer" (p 54)

Let us now see how this "world's biggest single customer" of arms utilises the purchased arms. US imperialists have established a network of military bases surrounding the Soviet Union and the socialist countries to use them as their operation bases in the event of a world war—in Europe NATO, in Asia and Middle East SEATO and CENTO (though this former Baghdad Pact does not include now Iraq after the overthrow of the Nuri Syeed regime), NEATO (combining South Korea, Formosa and Japan, officially the US government does not admit the existence of this military pact, though it is no secret that it exists very much), ANZUS roping in Australia and Newzealand, and a number of bilateral military pacts concluded by the US government in all regions of the world and over three thousand military bases spread all over the world. The Okinawa base is used for sending bombers and fighters to continue the dirty war in Vietnam. The direct military expenditure of the US government, between 1964 and 1968, amounted to 350,000 million dollars, 20 per cent above the figure of the second world war.

This, of course, does not include the astronomical figure spent by other imperialist partners of the US government In his book *Armament and Disarmament in the Latter Stage of Capitalism*, Fritz Wielmann estimated the expenditure on armaments of the capitalist countries as follows: between 1901 and 1914 the capitalist countries spent on armaments to the tune of average 4,000 million dollars annually, during the first world war annual average was 65,000 million dollars, on the eve of the second world war 130,000 million dollars annual average, and the cost of the second world war was 730,000 million dollars every year for the war period.

The ideologues of imperialism are taking great pains in putting forward justification in favour of such colossal expenditure on war preparations. A leading West-German military theorist Hans Karl Gunther is advancing the argument that "the armament race must continue...until one of the systems (socialism or capitalism) collapses ..the west is given a chance at victory by continued arming, whereas a general disarmament would take this chance away".

In addition to the increase in arms production and military budget, US imperialists have other ways too. Since their target is the destruction of the socialist system, they do not spare any efforts to achieve this goal. In the official budget allocations of the US government, funds were earmarked for espionage activities inside the East-European socialist countries to try to destroy them from within by organising subversive activities. The vast network of the notorious CIA machinery has been working surreptitiously as an auxiliary invisible unit of the US State Department.

CORRELATION OF FORCES CHANGES

While pursuing the global policy of war and aggression, US imperialism is underestimating one basic fact of history. The world is not the same as it was before the two world wars. In 1917 the first socialist state was born. In 1945, a socialist bloc had come into existence. The imperialist powers have lost their colonial possessions. Barring a few colonies, where fierce battle for liberation is going on, the overwhelming majority of the colonies have gained political independence. The massive economic assistance from the socialist camp is helping the former colonial possessions of imperialism to reduce their dependence on the western capitalist powers. China has broken away from the orbit of the capitalist world. The Soviet Union has developed into a mighty power. She can counter the economic and military challenge of the imperialist powers including the USA. And the economy of the socialist countries is on solid foundation, free from the crises frequently experienced by the capitalist world system.

Thus "the outcome of the second world war brought vast social and political changes in its train further weakening and restricting the old order of imperialism, and carrying forward the advance of socialism and national liberation to new sweeping victories" (R. Palme Dutt, Introduction to revised edition of *World Politics, 1918-1936*).

The stake in a global war this time is much higher. One should not therefore be misled. The growing aggressiveness of US imperialists can only frighten those who do not

see the growing resistance to the US war efforts. The mad ventures of US imperialism only indicate their desperateness to survive as the decadent bourgeois social order. We must not forget that the days are gone when imperialism could dictate the course of world events. "Imperialism can neither regain its lost historical initiative nor reverse world development. The main direction of mankind's development is determined by the world socialist system, the international working class, all revolutionary forces", declared the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in June 1969.

In our assessment of world developments we must always take into account the positive factors—the evergrowing strength of socialist countries the rapid growth of working-class movement in the capitalist countries, the resistance of democratic masses in the newly-liberated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to the US neocolonialist designs, and the organised offensive by all peaceloving forces and organisations. The combined efforts of these forces can certainly foil the conspiracy of imperialism and prevent the US imperialists from succeeding in their sinister and cynical efforts to unleash a new world war.

STRUGGLE FOR PEACE MEANS STRUGGLE AGAINST MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

The world communist movement repeatedly emphasised the need for intensifying the struggle for world peace. The Moscow Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties adopted a special "Appeal in Defence of Peace". It says: "The policy of aggression and war, pursued for the profit of monopoly capital, intensifies, in the capitalist countries *themselves, the exploitation of the masses, kindles racial* discrimination, cultivates brute force, leads to curtailing of democratic freedoms and jeopardises the vital interests of the people. The militarisation of the economy devours huge material resources, presses down the standard of living and places a heavy burden on the shoulders of working people. Imperialism is responsible for channelling the greatest achievements of science and technology, which throw open

new vistas to humanity, for purposes of destruction, while at the same time hundreds of millions of people suffer from hunger and poverty That is why the struggle for peace merges with the struggle for freedom of the peoples for progress and democracy, for deliverance from alien domination, from colonialism and neocolonialism, reaction and fascist dictatorship"

For communists, the struggle for peace is, therefore not merely a humanitarian question There is no denying of the fact that the humanitarian aspect of the struggle is no less important and communists, who love mankind most are certainly inspired by this At the same time communists view all struggles from the class point of view For communists, the struggle for world peace is a part of their all out struggle against the class enemy—the bourgeoisie, the monopoly capitalists, who impose war—global or local—on the working people

As Lenin pointed out All wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them The policy which a given state, a given class within that state pursued for a long time before the war is inevitably continued by that same class during the war, the form of action alone being changed" 'How can a war be accounted for without considering its bearing on the preceding policy of the given state, of the given system of states, the given classes? I repeat this is a basic point which is constantly overlooked Failure to understand it makes nine tenths of all war discussions mere wrangling so much verbiage' (*Collected Works* Vol 24, pp 400 & 402) The Marxist Leninist approach to the question of war and peace is therefore, determined by the class approach, first and foremost Failure to grasp this important aspect of the struggle for peace has been a serious weakness of the communist movement in our country

UNITED FRONT IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

The consistent efforts of the international communist movement, the passionate appeals issued by the Communist International to unite all forces opposed to fascism and

war, before the outbreak of the second world war, clearly show the importance communists attach to the struggle for peace.

Explaining the weakness of the communist movement in the thirties Dimitrov said: "The growth in the aggressiveness of German fascism and of the Japanese military clique is first and foremost the result of the fact that *the international proletariat did not succeed in acting unanimously with all the power of its gigantic forces, did not rally around itself all the working people and all the friends of peace into a mighty front against war.*" The CI repeatedly emphasised the importance of building up united front, popular front, peace front against fascism and war. Dimitrov dealt elaborately with the question of united front, its nature, scope, composition and character. While the "resolute action of the revolutionary proletariat" was the most important guarantee in halting the march of fascism and war, the formation of united front with all other sections of the working masses was an imperative need to achieve success.

It is necessary for us to learn from the shortcomings of the past and work ceaselessly to mobilise all sections of people against the drive of monopoly capitalism towards war. It is worth recollecting the teachings of Communist International now that the US imperialists are feverishly setting the stage for another war. It serves as a clear guideline, it emphasises repeatedly the urgency and need of building up united front against the class enemy. Today the people of the world is facing the terrible menace of the most monstrous enemy of mankind—the US monopolists. They are the most barbarous, most brutal, most inhuman exploiters of working people. They are responsible for the killing of thousands of innocent people in Vietnam by waging the aggressive war. They are infiltrating in all spheres of social life of the newly-liberated countries, thereby making every endeavour to restore colonialism by the back door.

It is against this deadly enemy of mankind that a vigorous struggle is to be waged. And to ensure success in this struggle, the cooperation of all sections of people in all

countries is the prime necessity We must keep in mind the difference between the "immediate and the ultimate", though one cannot be separated from the other The imme diate goal is to prevent the outbreak of a third world war The success in this immediate task creates conditions for the success in achieving the ultimate objective—elimination of capitalism and establishment of socialism in the world To maintain peace is in the interest of the working class and working people to achieve success in realising their ultimate goal

WAR CAN BE PREVENTED

The question is asked by many, including some communists Is it possible to avert a world war when the capitalist system is in operation in most of the countries and the United States, with all the modern scientific and technological means, is providing leadership to the capitalist world? The answer to this question is again provided by Dimitrov

He said 'In addition to the openly reactionary leaders who disrupt the unity of action of the international proletariat in defence of peace there are also 'left' phrasemongers who propagate fatalistic views to the effect that war is *inevitable* and the maintenance of peace *impossible* Since the fundamental cause of war is capitalism, then, they say, so long as the latter exists, it is impossible to avoid war, and it is hopeless and useless to fight for the maintenance of peace Such people are out and-out doctrinaires, if not simply imposters They see everywhere around them the raging forces of war, but they do not at all notice the mighty factors for peace"

It was before the second world war that Dimitrov brushed aside such doctrinaire approach to the question He mentioned at that time the forces of peace are to be found in the growing strength of the USSR and in the proletariat of the capitalist countries He castigated those who thought that war and peace depend merely on the capitalist governments He made it clear that mass of the people, even in the capitalist countries, do not want war

What Dimitrov described as "fatalistic views" are being theorised today by the Chinese Communist Party. The doctrinaires fail to understand the mighty factors of peace and seem to be overwhelmed by the "raging forces of war". They miss the great significance of the positive factors. the combined strength of the socialist camp, the mighty working-class movement in the capitalist countries, the growing upsurge among the masses in the newly-liberated countries to rid themselves of the legacies of colonial rule and above all the emergence of a socialist state in one part of Germany —the GDR, the first German peace state, where the clamour for war and revanchism will never be heard again. Failure to understand the significance of these positive factors is bound to lead to lack of confidence resulting in the fatalistic outlook which only inspires false confidence in the minds of warmongers.

Dimitrov emphasised that "the fascist aggressors must be made to feel most emphatically that his every step is vigilantly watched by *millions of people and that any attempt* to attack other peoples will meet with the determined resistance of the proletariat and working people of the whole world... Only the proletariat, uniting its ranks, can be the organiser of such a peace front, can be its driving force, its backbone. This is now the *central task* of the international proletariat as a whole... A successful struggle to maintain peace absolutely requires that the joint activity of the proletariat and the widest masses of the people be directed against *the specific instigators of war* and against *those* forces inside the country which help them directly or *indirectly*." "The whole thing", Dimitrov said, "*is to organise* the struggle of the peoples for the maintenance of peace in good time and to carry it on continually and everywhere against the fascist warmongers and their backers... To *want* peace is not enough. It is necessary to *fight* for peace." And, the "peace front will become powerful and invincible if it organises practical mass action, not restricting itself to protests, resolutions and declarations".

UNITED PEACE FRONT

It is in this spirit that Ercoli (Palmiro Togliatti), in his report to the Seventh Congress of the CI appealed to all peaceloving forces to unite against the menace of fascism "We defend peace because we are striving to ensure the conditions for the victory of the revolution", said Ercoli and the appeal was launched, the appeal addressed to all those who are opposed to war

"We launch our appeal to the great masses who do not want war

"Let us unite our forces Let us fight together for peace Let us organise the united front of all who want to defend and preserve peace by making the fight for peace the centre of our activity, we give the lie in the most striking manner to all the various slanderers, ranking from the bourgeoisie to the counter revolutionary Trotskyists who have the effrontery to say that communists are in favour of war, that they base their hopes on war, as if they think that only war will create situation in which it will be possible to fight for the revolution Comrades, in the fight for peace, against imperialist war our immediate basic political task consists in creating the widest united front of the masses of workers and peasants, and petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals It is just in this sphere, comrades, in the sphere of the struggle for peace that our united front policy can score the greatest successes"

Expressing the disappointment at the inadequacy of the work done in this sphere by communists Ercoli said 'We cannot declare ourselves satisfied, either with the progress which has been made in this field or with the successes of the united front in the antiwar struggle in general The volume of the united front movement against war is still not in accord with the intensity of war preparations on the part of capitalists, is still not in accord with the acuteness and gravity of the war danger All our sections are faced with the task of doing all that is necessary so that the fight for peace will embrace all those who do not want war, all those who hate war, all those who are ready to fight for peace social democratic workers, the masses of those with

pacifist inclinations, women, children, national minorities that are under the threat of war."

Communists never underestimated the necessity and importance of the work among all peaceloving people as unimportant or nonrevolutionary. Emphasising the importance of the work even among the pacifists, Ercoli said, "We revolutionary workers understand and correctly appreciate the aspirations of the masses who show this pacifist tendency, even if it is still sometimes expressed in a naive and politically false way. Our place is at the side of these masses, explaining to them what they do not yet understand well, at the same time assisting them in fighting to achieve all that is fundamentally just and human in their striving for peace... We must penetrate among the pacifist masses and carry out a big work of enlightenment among them, using forms and organisations and action which are adapted to the level of consciousness of these masses and which give them the possibility of taking the first step in the effective struggle against war and capitalism."

WARNING AGAINST SECTARIANISM

Warning against the sectarian danger and deviation Ercoli cautioned communists to be extremely careful in their work with other forces like the pacifists: "We must always take two things into account. The first is that the organisation of the pacifist masses cannot and must not be a communist organisation; the second is that, in working in this organisation, communists must never give up explaining with the greatest patience and insistence their own point of view on all the problems of the struggle against war. In this way success can be achieved in emancipating the sincere pacifists from the influence of illusions and mistaken views, and exposing those hypocritical pacifists who by their policy screen the preparation for war. Unfortunately, in many cases it must be admitted that our comrades follow the opposite line to this. On the one hand they attempt to give to the organisations of the pacifist masses the character of a communist organisation and introduce into it inappropriate methods of leadership by the party. On the other hand, they

neglect their obligation to conduct propaganda of our correct Leninist position in the struggle against war. It is necessary to correct both these mistakes."

In the concluding remarks in reply to the discussion on his report Ercoli sounded the note of confidence and stressed on the urgency of united work for peace. "We must break through the narrow bounds of the former antiwar and antimilitarist work, we must give our fight for peace the widest character, as far as possible embracing the whole of the people... We shall convey to the whole world our profound conviction that the preservation of peace is possible, that it is possible to hinder war, that under definite conditions to avoid war is a thing that is possible and realisable. On the basis of this conviction we shall gather around us millions of persons for the struggle for the great, most just and most socialist cause—the cause of peace "

The resolution adopted by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International after discussing the report of Ercoli stated that "the struggle for peace opens up before the communist parties the greatest opportunities for creating the broadest united front All those interested in the preservation of peace should be drawn into this united front. The concentration of forces against the chief instigators of war at any given moment (at the present time—against fascist Germany, and against Poland and Japan which are in league with it) constitutes a most important tactical task of the communist parties... The drawing of pacifist organisations and their adherents into the united front of struggle for peace acquires great importance in mobilising the petty-bourgeois masses, progressive intellectuals, women and youth against war..."

BIRTH OF WORLDWIDE PEACE MOVEMENT

The all-embracing world peace movement was not in existence before the first world war. However, there was an attempt to build up such a peace movement in the early thirties on the initiative of such outstanding personalities like Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse and others (incidental-

ly, two Indian personalities signed the appeal issued for convening the Amsterdam Antiwar Congress) The popular front movements in various European countries were the main form of activity prior to the second world war And this movement achieved limited success The need for a really broad peace movement was felt by many after the second world war A number of intellectuals from various countries assembled in Wroclaw, Poland, in the year 1948, to discuss ways and means to unite the forces of peace and to lay the foundation of a worldwide movement for peace An international Coordinating Bureau of intellectuals was formed with the purpose of convening a World Congress for Peace It issued an Appeal together with the Women's International Democratic Federation and a number of internationally known eminent individuals including Pablo Picasso, Pablo Neruda, Prof Juliot-Curie, Madame Irene Juliot Curie, Louis Aragon, Pierre Cot, Vercos, Madame Romain Rolland, Pietro Nenni, Michael Sholokov, Martin Anderson-Nexo, Heinrich Mann, Anna Seghers, Prof J D Bernal, Prof J B S Haldane, D N Pritt, the Dean of Canterbury, Howard Fast and a host of others In less than two months, the Appeal received the support of 18 international organisations, 1,015 national organisations, 10,000 provincial organisations and 2,895 public figures from almost every country of the world

The Appeal was clear It stated "Instead of the decrease in armies and armaments which it would have been natural to expect at the end of the world war, an overwhelming arms race has begun Military blocs which threaten the peaceful coexistence of the peoples are being formed In some parts of the world fires of war are still burning, lit and fed by the intervention of foreign states and the direct action of their armed forces But the peoples of the world do not want war And the duty of all honest people, of men of art, science and literature, of all democratic organisations is to stand firmly resolved and with a burning desire to achieve unity in the defence of peace between the peoples"

This simple Appeal rallied round it thousands all over the world The first World Congress of Defenders of Peace, held in Paris and Prague simultaneously—the French government

refused visa to the delegates from many socialist countries as a result of which those who could not go to Paris met in Prague and endorsed the decisions adopted in Paris from 20 to 25 April 1949 This was the beginning of the first organised worldwide peace movement, the all embracing peace movement in the postwar period The World Council of Peace was born as an organisation following a decision of the second World Congress of the Defenders of Peace held in Warsaw from 16 to 22 November 1950 During the last two decades the WCP has emerged as the mightiest international peace organisation having national committees in almost all the countries of the world, enjoying the support of cross sections of population including the ruling parties of many Afro-Asian countries and the unqualified support of the socialist countries The WCP presents the largest united platform of the peace forces

In the process of intensification of the struggle for peace various other national and international organisations have been created in various parts of the world For one reason or other, there are still many people who have their reservations in joining the organisations of the WCP In their own way they would like to continue the work for peace The WCP, therefore, took the initiative to develop joint work with them The result is quite encouraging and joint actions of peace forces have become the feature of the day

The powerful anti-Vietnam-war movement in the United States, organised by more than 300 peace groups jointly, has succeeded in exerting considerable influence on the US public mind The campaign against nuclear weapons in the West-European countries has become a popular movement In Japan, thousands and thousands of people participate in the movement for banning atomic weapons The militant demonstrations organised by the Japanese people against the Japan US security pact, against NEATO and for withdrawing US military bases from Japan indicate the powerful expression of the Japanese people's determined bid to oppose any attempt to drag Japan into the fold of US war machinery It can be said that today the peace organisations act on almost every issue concerned with war and peace And this movement is growing with every passing day

EXPERIENCE OF INDIAN PEACE MOVEMENT

The Indian contingent of the World Peace Council has from the very beginning—barring that short period at the initial stage when the sectarian leadership of B. T. Ranadive tried to convert the peace organisation into a communist organisation ignoring the teachings of the Communist International regarding the united front for the struggle for peace—pursued broadly a correct policy of united front in the peace movement. It succeeded in enlisting the support of eminent personalities from different walks of life, political leaders belonging to all parties who were prepared to work together in support of the liberation movements of the colonial peoples, against atomic weapons, for nonalignment, against US neocolonialist designs directed against the independence and sovereignty of our country, against US aggression in any part of the world, particularly in Vietnam.

As was expected, reaction dubbed the peace movement as a front organisation of communists Reactionary elements, who now belong to the Syndicate after the split in the Congress, joined the chorus though the foreign policy of the government of India enunciated by their party was, more or less, in broad conformity with the policies and programmes of the peace movement.

INCORRECT UNDERSTANDING LEADS TO MISGIVINGS

There were misgivings in the ranks of the communist movement too Many underestimated the significance of the struggle for peace in spite of the valuable guidance of the international communist movement. Their participation in the activities for peace was more a matter of ritual than something arising out of deep conviction. There is a tendency to belittle the importance of joint work with others, particularly with congressmen. It appears to be difficult for many to reconcile with the idea of joint work for peace with the very same congressmen with whom communists are at loggerheads so far as the struggle in the domestic front is concerned. This difficulty arises because of our lack of

correct understanding of united front, be it for peace or other issues.

It should be borne in mind, when communists work jointly with other forces, particularly with those which represent some alien class, they never subordinate the interest of working class to the bourgeoisie. They work in the united front with heterogeneous elements for a limited objective without forgoing their independent role—the vanguard role of the working class. A united front is a platform and not a party. No parties in the united front give up their own policy or programme. They unite for a particular cause and for joint struggle to achieve that cause. So far as the peace movement is concerned, the representatives of different political parties work together for world peace, which, to communists, is essentially a struggle against imperialism, against monopoly capital.

Lenin taught us that even a section of the bourgeoisie may oppose the drive of the monopoly capital for unleashing a world war at a particular time for some particular reason. The Seventh Congress of the CI advocated joint work with those who are prepared to even go half the way: "The communists must invite the collaboration of all pacifist organisations that are prepared to go with them even if only half the way towards a genuine struggle against imperialist war."

Those who have reservations, or in some way opposition, to joint work for peace with congressmen, should better recall the teachings of the CI. Dimitrov stated clearly: "In forming the antifascist people's front, a correct approach to those organisations and parties whose membership comprises a considerable number of the working peasantry and the mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie is of great importance. In the capitalist countries the majority of these parties and organisations, political as well as economic, are still under the influence of the bourgeoisie and follow it. The social composition of these parties and organisations is heterogeneous. They include rich peasants side by side with landless peasants, big businessmen alongside petty shopkeepers; but control is in the hands of the former, the agents of big capital. This obliges us to approach *different*

organisations in different ways, remembering that often the bulk of the membership ignores the real political character of the leadership Under certain conditions we can and must try to draw these parties and organisations or certain sections of them to the side of the antifascist people's *front despite their bourgeois leadership* "

In *"Left-wing" Communism* Lenin said 'The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive and skilful *obligatory* use of every, even the smallest, 'rift' among the enemies, every antagonism of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional Those who fail to understand this, fail to understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern socialism *in general*' (*Selected Works*, Three-Vol Edn 1964 Vol III p 418)

It is therefore, absolutely correct to make all endeavours *to build up united front for peace with congressmen* It is all the more important now in view of the political developments in our country during the last one year The turn of events in India has vindicated the correctness of the Party Programme adopted at the Seventh Congress, held in Bombay from 13 to 23 December 1964, which advocated the formation of a national democratic front The Programme says 'Developing out of the joint actions of the mass organisations of workers, peasants employees and agricultural workers, as well as of the Communist Party, and other left and socialist parties, *the national democratic* front will draw into its ranks not only the masses following the Congress, but also its progressive sections"

And it is this progressive section of the undivided Congress that has joined the peace and solidarity movement And in this field it provides the basis of the democratic front for a particular objective and with a limited scope It was not an accident that this very section which consistently took an anti imperialist position, was the most

vocal campaigner for the election of V V Giri as the President of India And today, again it is this section of the divided Congress which is fighting within its party for progressive policies directed against Indian monopoly capital and for immediate land reforms Thus the joint work in the peace movement did certainly contribute, though in a small way, to the greater national cause This should not be minimised or underplayed

The weakness of the Indian peace movement is not in trying to organise united action with congressmen The weakness lies, first and foremost, in the failure to mobilise the organised masses—workers, peasants and the bulk of the working people—as the most organised, active and effective detachment of the united struggle for peace Failure to organise independent actions of the masses from their own platforms remains a major weakness It is not enough to respond to the call of the peace movement from time to time Consistent and sustained activity against each and every move of the imperialists should be organised by the mass organisations themselves In a country where the overwhelming majority of the population live and work in rural areas, the peasantry and rural population are not drawn in the peace movement The relationship of our struggle for social reforms and of the struggle for peace is not properly explained to them In order to draw the entire working people in the peace movement, it is necessary to explain that the struggle against the drive of the international monopoly capitalists for war is a part of the struggle of the working masses in our country against their counterparts Indian monopoly capital is intensifying its offensive against the working people and is inflicting more and more hardships on the masses, it is creating obstacles to all social reforms and is tightening up its control in the sphere of our economy and political life The interest of Indian monopoly capital is inextricably linked with that of international monopoly capital Unless this is explained and clearly understood, response from the bulk of the working people will always remain lukewarm

Secondly, though a number of important congressmen are active in the peace movement, the vast masses following

the Congress have never participated in the peace movement. In both cases, it remains a sort of unity at the top level.

Thirdly, the peace movement correctly tried, and in some cases did succeed, to associate individual leaders of other parties, particularly the SSP and PSP, who do not support the policies of the peace movement. They have completely erroneous views on international affairs particularly on US aggression in Vietnam and Israeli aggression on Arab countries.

It is necessary for the party of the working class to launch an ideological campaign, in a friendly and persuasive manner, to help these left parties get rid of the misgivings and wrong outlook on international developments. Genuine socialists can never compromise with the sinister conspiracy of the monopoly capitalists. And the mistakes committed by the European social-democrats, before the second world war, must not be allowed to be repeated. With great patience the followers of the SSP and PSP have to be explained this.

Political developments in our country demand united action of all progressive forces. And the present international situation demands united action of all forces to prevent the outbreak of a third world war. To build up a united front is by itself a major political struggle. It is not an easy task.

The example of Vietnam should serve as a lesson to all those who strive to build a solid, effective united front against imperialism. Communists take their rightful place in the forefront in any struggle against imperialism. While striving for world peace, they champion the cause of national liberation, which again is directed against imperialism.

Vietnam is the most glaring example of the struggle against the most brutal and most aggressive imperialist power. And the building of a *multiclass* united front against US imperialism has greatly contributed to the success of the struggle of the Vietnamese people, which is being waged on three fronts—political, military and diplomatic. It required great patience, skill, political maturity and wisdom

to build up the National Front for Liberation, which provides leadership to the people of Vietnam. Flexible approach, consistent efforts to unite all sections and all forces who are opposed to US aggression and who stand for the liberation of Vietnam irrespective of their class character and views on other matters, for the purpose of attaining the immediate goal—national salvation—succeeded in bringing about the united front. That is how tiny Vietnam has humbled the mighty imperialist giant—US imperialism—in the battlefield, isolated the US government in the international arena and earned the sympathy and support of the entire world The united resistance of the Vietnamese people against the US aggressors is containing US imperialism. It is a fight for independence and national salvation of the Vietnamese people It is a fight for ensuring the independence, security, national sovereignty of all countries of Asia including India The significance of the struggle of our Vietnamese friends, the meaning of their unparalleled suffering and sacrifice have to be understood properly.

It has also to be understood that the same US imperialism which is waging the dirty war in Vietnam is mounting its all-round offensive against all the newly-liberated countries. US imperialists do not always go for hot war everywhere In some countries, as in Vietnam now, they wage the most barbarous war, in some others they infiltrate in the field of economy, culture, social and political life of the nation, in others they organise coups d'etat, as in Indonesia, Ghana and Cambodia, in order to put some of their puppets to power, in still others they continue to pressurise the government-in-power to toe their global policy of war and aggression They choose the most reactionary, corrupt and conservative elements to create US lobbies in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America

It is against these machinations of US imperialists that the peace movement in India has to wage a relentless battle. It should not be forgotten that the interests of US monopoly capital and its counterparts in India are closely linked, though on the question of unleashing a global war right now Indian monopoly capital may not line up with

its US masters The struggle of the working people of our country for social reforms, for curbing the dangerously increasing menace of monopoly capital and the struggle against the global policy of US imperialism are intertwined today as never before The struggle for peace, so far as our country is concerned, has a concrete task to fulfil It is not merely an abstract concept If we fail to understand this, the importance and significance of the Indian peace movement will never be properly understood

It should also be remembered that it is not an accident that the forces of right reaction in our country have unleashed a mounting propaganda offensive against the Soviet Union and socialist countries The US lobby in our country is out to intensify the campaign of lies and slander against the socialist countries in its bid to poison the mind of the people, to prejudice them against the socialist camp and to create favourable situation to align closely with the western imperialist powers

To foil the attempts of US imperialists and their henchmen in our country, it is imperative that all those who value our independence and sovereignty, all those who stand in support of the liberation movements, all those who oppose colonialism and neocolonialism should unite together in the broadest united front against imperialism

To save mankind from the catastrophe of another world war, we must intensify the struggle for peace This is the historic responsibility that we have to fulfil This is in the best interest of the working class and the working people This is in the best interest of the victory for the worldwide struggle for socialism And in this historic task of united struggle against the forces of capitalism and war, Vietnam instils faith and confidence in us

Lenin in the Tamil Press (1917-24)

C. S Subramanyam

The Lenin Centenary has aroused a deep desire to know something about the actual impact of this great personality and his work on India and Indians during his lifetime To get some idea of this impact a search has been undertaken to look into the past and this study relates to the period from 1917 to 1924 till about the time of the great leader's death This study is confined to the reports that have appeared about the events, meetings, etc , in the south of India and particularly in the nationalist press of the Madras City.

The first impression one gets from a study of the available materials is the tremendous importance of this period in the history of the national-liberation movement No student of social history, who is interested in the understanding of it, can afford to neglect this interesting study of the events of this period and for a Marxist it is all the more important. But that is a separate task and has to be worked out on the basis of a wider canvas and greater data ranging over the whole of India. I shall confine myself to naming a few salient characteristics that strike one's mind while studying the reportage in the press It must be

emphasised however that this study is neither complete nor exhaustive and these characteristics of the period stated herein are from within the limits of the available material studied up to now

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERIOD IN SOUTH INDIA

The period from 1917 to 1924 is marked by a series of strikes by workers, the formation of a number of labour unions, as for example, the Madras Labour Union of the Buckingham & Carnatic Mills then employing over 6,000 workers, and the unions of railway workers (both the South Indian and MSM railways), kerosene oil workers, press workers, general workers, etc Then there had been the spontaneous agitation against the rise in the prices, often taking the form of riots by the people, looting of shops, etc From May to September 1918, according to the government, looting took place in over a hundred places in Madras Presidency (comprising the present Tamilnadu, the greater part of Andhra and parts of presentday Kerala and Mysore) In political agitation, there has been the satyagraha movement following the Rowlatt Committee report and the Rowlatt Acts, the anger roused by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the noncooperation movement, the Moplah rebellion, the formation of the Swaraj Party "to wreck the reforms from within", the non-Brahmin movement and agitation even by 'land owners" against resettlement, i e the periodical revision of land revenue rates by the government The satyagraha and noncooperation movement were the forms of struggle to obtain some measure of freedom from the oppressive rule of imperialists In some of the speeches made by the propagandists of the satyagraha movement as reported in the press, one finds such references as that the smallest policeman in the land has authority to do what he likes and that is what we want to abolish

FIRST NEWS ABOUT THE REVOLUTION

Even as the political situation was hotting up in India, came the news of the fall of the tsar in March 1917 and, what was more, the news of the October Revolution. This was given out as "Maximalists" triumph, Maximalist being the term used in the first news telegrams to connote the Bolsheviks; and one of the first reports appearing in the press has published a telegram of Reuters under dateline 8 November 1917, that Lenin who was the leader of the movement had demanded an *immediate armistice and peace*, that Lenin who was received with prolonged cheers made a speech in which he outlined the three problems before Russian democracy, the *first*, "*the immediate conclusion of the war, for which the new government must propose an armistice*, the *second*, *the handing over of the land to the peasants* and the *third*, the *settlement of the economic crisis*".

Thus, the very first news that appeared in the press clearly states that Lenin was the leader of the movement, and we can take it that this idea of Lenin as the leader of the Russian revolution became established in the minds of the newspaper reading public in India, especially among the nationalist leaders. And the attempts of imperialist propaganda to blacken Lenin by slandering him as a German agent, in its own way, helped to confirm this idea that Lenin was the leader of the revolution and further evoked a desire to know more about Lenin.

Tracing the references to the course of the revolution, the comments on the doings of the Bolshevik government till the time of the death of Lenin in January 1924, and the editorial notices on his death, the impression one gets can be summed up and classified on the following lines.

Firstly, that although at the end of the first world war in 1918, several crowns had been toppled in Europe, the Russian revolution had a special significance to the Indian nationalist leaders because they found that in actual *practice* it was the Bolshevik government that implemented the declaration of self-determination and took a consistent stand for it. And this *practical* demonstration was an important fact that

made them take all the slanders against Lenin and the Bolshevik government with a pinch of salt

Secondly, that the Bolshevik government under Lenin represented a genuine attempt to create an entirely new social order

Thirdly, that intellectuals were eager to understand and explain the Russian revolution within the limits of the material available to them and their understanding

Fourthly, that a distinct trend, although a very insignificant one at that time, arose which in *practical* politics looked to Lenin and his policy as something which should be understood and followed for the liberation of the masses, to make freedom real and meaningful to the mass of the people, especially the labourers

Fifthly that by the time of his death Lenin was universally recognised as one of the greatest personalities of the modern era

HOW WILL IT AFFECT THE 'ALLIES"?

The first comments that appeared in the nationalist press at that time are more in the nature of comments from the point of view of the effect of the Russian revolution on the fortunes of the "Allies" represented by Britain and the other countries against Germany To some extent this is understandable, when we realise that even the demand for self-government was based on the argument that Britain should give freedom to India so that it can help it in its war effort The class of intellectuals and public men were anxious to proclaim their loyalty to the "raj" and state, that given freedom, they would be in a much better position to mobilise men and money for the successful prosecution of the war While this attitude shows that, although there is no evidence of a consistent anti imperialist fight, it is the beginning of a process where the imperialist rulers could no longer depend on the unquestioning loyalty and obedience of the subjects i e the master could not depend on blind obedience of the servant carrying out his behests that the slave will not tolerate his being a slave any longer.

It is this aspect of the growing consciousness of the

subject people that is important for a growing revolutionary movement. To dismiss this as yet weak demand for self-determination as evidence of loyalty to the imperialists and fail to see the potentialities of it would be a grave error. Some loyalists there were, and their loyalty to the imperialist rulers was such that when the actual moment came for an action against the misdeeds of imperialism they ranged themselves on the side of the rulers but the people rallied behind those who *acted* against imperialism. In fact this is the key to the understanding of the growth of the Congress, under Gandhi's leadership, as a mass organisation and the decay of the influence of the moderates among their own followers, their unpopularity among the people and even the growing hatred of the people against them. Gandhi, in his address to the Gujarat Political Conference in December 1917 says, 'the time for holding meetings and passing resolution is past. Meetings and speeches have their own place and time, but they cannot make a Nation.'

At the beginning, the interest of the press in the Russian revolution was from two angles: one, that of the fall of the tsar—the dethronement of a corrupt regime of terror, the setting up of a democratic government, of a republic and the other, what has already been mentioned above—what effect it would have on the fortunes of the Allies in the war. While the February Revolution was welcomed as something that would help to clear the Augean stables, set the house in order, so that the mighty Russian manpower and resources can bring about a decisive change in favour of the Allies in this war, there was a certain amount of uneasiness when the first reports of the 'Maximalists" (the extremists) getting the upper hand came in. One should say there was a sort of confusion, a puzzle and more so when the report came that Lenin, the leader of the revolution, had called for an immediate armistice with a view to ending the war right then. Will there be a separate peace?—asked *The Hindu* in the concluding portion of its first comment on 24 November 1917 on the October Revolution. Similarly the *Swadesamithran*, the Tamil nationalist daily, in its first comment on 20 November 1917 wrote thus: 'Since it appears that the extremists have gained the upper-

hand now in Russia, the situation in Russia so far as the war is concerned will not be favourable to the Allies."

BHARATHI'S GREATNESS—FIRST TO SEE SOCIALISM WINNING

While editorial comment was from the point of view the way it would affect the Allied cause, there was one man who saw something more fundamental and it is not surprising that that man should be Subramanya Bharathi. Bharathi was not only a powerful writer of a new Tamil style of prose writing, a poet of outstanding qualities, but one who had the unique past of having been among the radicals supporting Lokamanya Tilak at the Surat Congress, of one who had started a weekly Tamil paper to propagate those radical ideas. He writes in an article published in the *Swadesamithran* on 28 November 1917 as follows:

It appears as if the Socialist Party in Russia would achieve its objective. We can call it the 'Samathva' Socialist Party—the 'Equality Party'—in Tamil. Even that would not be a correct translation. The main principle of this party is to change the present property ownership by which a few are wealthy and many are poor, that all the property in the world, that is the land, should be divided equally among all the people of the world and to change the present competition in the industrial world into a system where all will work together. Therefore it would appear that it is better to name this party as a unity party. There are some who call this party as 'Abeda Party' (Communist Party)."

This shows that he had in his own way, a general idea of what is meant by socialism, what its objective is and he realised that the Socialist Party in Russia was succeeding in realising its objective. And so, for the *first* time, *perhaps in the whole of India*, there was a man on the scene, who under the impact of events in Russia puts socialism as a practical doctrine which is being implemented, transforming society in Russia. That he should do so within three weeks of the date of the October Revolution is all the more remarkable!

Subramanya Bharathi's greatness is not only in the fact that he was one of the earliest persons to state that the Russian revolution was a socialist revolution which was succeeding in its objective, though his idea of what socialism is was too vague and may not be very correct in the strict Marxian sense. But a survey of what he has written from about this time till the time of his death in September 1921 reveals an understanding of the Russian revolution far ahead of his contemporaries and a genuine friendliness towards it. This is illustrated in the following.

In an introductory passage to an article on the "Marriage Laws of New Russia" (*Swadesamithran*, 19 June 1920) he very distinctly states that "the tsarist government was destroyed mainly by the strength of the Bolshevik Party; yet, power did not pass immediately into the hands of the Bolsheviks. For some time the capitalist groups made Kerensky the leader and started a kind of republic. But Kerensky could not stand against the revolutionary flood and he fled the country, taking refuge in one of the Allied countries." This shows that he grasped the fact that the revolution was a continuous process from February 1917 onwards and the leading role was played by the Bolsheviks.

In another article in January 1918, where he refers to the state of Tamil journals and newspapers, he criticises one of them for the ill-informed item of news which stated that in Russia "there is a man called Bolshevik who is supposed to have formed a party and was harming the cause of the Allies" and laughs at it for not knowing that it is another name of the Maximalist Party—a party of revolutionaries.

BHARATHI'S IDEALS BEING REALISED IN PRACTICE

Bharathi refers to the proposal to abolish money in Soviet Russia in an article published on 2 March 1921. His own ideal, he stated, in one of his poems runs thus:

The thirty crore people's society
To the whole of it: Socialism...

From now on we shall make a rule
Which we will always guard

If food, there is not, for one individual
Destroy, we will, the whole world...

Writing in the same strain in one of his articles, he states: "*Firstly* we should end this horror, where a few have more than ample food and many die for want of it. Some have fenced (enclosed) all that they can—the wet land, dry land, garden land, rivers, mines, etc.—all god's property. Many have only the heaven as their property. Mere air is the food of many. The remedy for this is the realisation that all are equal—brothers. The rich should see that the poor do not starve. But if we *cannot do that*, we should lay down a law and make land common for all the people as the socialists in Europe are doing."

In another article published in the *Swadesamithran* on 23 April 1920, Bharathi writes: "...the principle that all distinctions in wealth should be done away with is spreading in Europe... Already in the republic that has been established under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky in Russia, all the cultivable land and other wealth have become the common property of all the people born in the country."

There are further references to Russia as well in Bharathi's other writings and the editorial comments made during the time he was a subeditor in *Swadesamithran* from November 1920 to September 1921, which provide a good deal of material to show his capacity to bring out the utter falsehood of the anti-Russian news sent out by the imperialist newsagencies and show the real strength of the socialist regime. He laughs derisively at the attempt of the British government to prevent the spread of Bolshevik ideas in Central Asia, ending the piece with the remark: "as an English proverb says—Will the sea obey King Canute's commands?"

A GENUINE FRIEND OF THE SOVIETS

In the article on the "Marriage Laws of New Russia", he explains how under the Bolsheviks only the idea of an

equal moral code for man and woman will come into being instead of the abominable lie that under Bolsheviks women are held in common He says that even a clever man's bluff will be exposed within a week and how long these people can go on spreading slander about a great country

On 11 March 1921 in a subeditorial comment on the London *Times* correspondent's despatch about the difficulties of Russia, it is stated, with native humour, that these men who, when there is the slightest sign of smoke from Lenin's beard, would telegraph the whole world that his ashes have been taken to the Atlantic for immersion in the sea"

On 12, 14 and 23 March 1921, one comes across editorial comments applauding the good relations between Russia and Turkey and the success of Soviet diplomacy On 15 January 1921, in an article on the trade agreement between Britain and Russia, Bharathi comments ironically how greatly the minds of Lloyd George and Curzon—who had declared that only after destroying Lenin, Trotsky and their associates and consigning their ashes to the sea, will they treat Russia as a country of men worth talking to—would have suffered before agreeing to this trade agreement

In the light of these instances we can maintain that Bharathi, the great patriot poet and writer, was the staunchest friend of Russia, who found much in unison with his own ideals in Russia A close friend of Bharathi, P Kodandaraman related to me that he remembers taking Bharathi to a meeting of M & SM railway workers at Perambur in Madras, where he had thrilled the workers singing his patriotic songs in the spirited way only he could

SELF-DETERMINATION IMPLEMENTED ONLY BY RUSSIA

Soon after the October Revolution, the bourgeois press got busy spreading slanders against the Bolsheviks, that Lenin and his men were German agents bribed by them to cause confusion on the eastern front, that they have no sense of honour or obligation But the businesslike way in which the Soviet government proceeded to start armistice

talks and the line taken by the Soviet delegation at the Brest-Litovsk talks, insisting that the people of former empires should have the right to determine for themselves what form of government they should have, whether they want to be independent or what type of relation they will have with other states, showed the German negotiators in their true colours and the Soviet representatives as genuine believers in the *self determination* of all people

This is well illustrated by the comment of *The Hindu* on 5 January 1918, which says that 'the Bolsheviks are not altogether lost to all sense of honour is evident in the summary way they broke off peace negotiations with the enemy on what is eminently a point of honour!', and of the *Swadesamithran* on 7 January 1918, which says that consistent with their genuine desire for self determination and sincerity in the practical implementation of it, the Russians demanded the withdrawal of German troops from Courland, Lithuania, etc to enable the people of those areas to decide for themselves their future and the refusal of the Germans to agree to this just proposal exposed their hypocrisy!" Besides, in one of the Gleanings from the Urdu Press" published in *The Hindu* on 28 June 1923 is an extract from *Al Akhbar* praising Russian altruism which says, 'The Russians have decided that they should give a helping hand to every oppressed nation to root out tyranny and oppression in the world"

And this point is well emphasised by a letter from Dr P Varadarajulu Naidu, a prominent leader of the Home Rule movement of the Congress and a leader who helped the workers in forming their organisation to fight for the betterment of their condition Dr Naidu in a letter dated 4 March 1918 written to the *New India* (which appears in its issue of 20 March 1918) says "And tangible proof of good faith in the doctrine of every country under its own government is given till now only by the Bolsheviks of Russia So far the Bolsheviks are the only people who have tried to set up an international code based on the fundamental principles of justice Imperialistic England—this phrase like charity covers a multitude of sins—can ill afford to give a status to the doctrine preached and prac-

tised by the Bolsheviks for it is a question very largely affecting their material prosperity."

DISBELIEF IN SLANDERS AGAINST THE SOVIET

It is this aspect of the sincerity of the Bolsheviks in the principle of self-determination, the concrete manner in which they stood for it against the Germans, that was responsible for the growing disbelief in all the slanders against them. Much of the abuse against them as bloodthirsty devils, of men who had no honour, no principles, etc. simply did not wash. Most of the news manufactured from Riga through the London *Times* correspondent sent by Reuters about the collapse of the regime etc. began to be taken with a pinch of salt. And the oft-repeated news of collapse followed so often with the news of Bolshevik trouble only made the despatches look ridiculous How well the nationalist press saw through all this can be seen in some of the comments of the Tamil nationalist daily *Swadesamithran*, which we have already referred to earlier. There are some other instances where editorial comment has always stated that it is not easy to conclude that all that the telegrams say is true, as for example *The Hindu* on 5 January 1918: "Mr Ransome's sympathetic account of the Bolshevik government in the *Daily News* was not altogether stupid and wrong as the *Times* sought to make out."

In an editorial review of Edmund Candler's book (*Bolshevism—Dream and Fact*) on 23 June 1920, the paper says: "The writer can scarcely be said to have paid due justice to the working out of the great experiment, which by itself according to the latest information available is not so far removed from civilisation as we were asked to believe by interested informants."

On 11 May 1922, in an editorial on the "Geneva Crisis", it condemns the attitude of France in regard to negotiations with Soviet Russia and goes on to say that despite all the successive white revolts, which she along with Britain set up and encouraged, failed to crush Soviet Russia, it (the Soviet) has held firm power for over five years; and it goes

on further to say What justice is there in insisting that a state should conform to a particular type in order that it might be admitted into the comity of nations for purposes of commercial intercourse? Such an insistence, however great our dislike of systems of government prevailing there at is bound to choke the human genius for experiment and adjustment and must be condemned on broader grounds of progress

Then again on 16 April 1924, in an editorial entitled 'The Soviet and Peace on the Labour government's rapprochement with Russia, it says, the Soviet easily developed a status of power, which compelled the recognition of its adversaries , and further on in the same editorial commending Soviet views on nonintervention it refers to the policy of spheres of influence by British and other imperial powers in regard to Oriental states and the Soviet representative stating that they must adopt the principle of respecting the independence and sovereignty of Oriental states 'The Soviet declares it will have none of them (the spheres of influence) and herein is laid bare the real Soviet attitude to the problem of World Peace"

When we remember that the October Revolution came just two months after the Montagu declaration of the goal of "responsible government by stages for India" it is easy to understand how well the intelligent man perceived the difference between pious declarations promising something in the future by stages and the *practical* and *immediate* implementation of the principle

ON THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT AND RUSSIA

As one treads one's way through the press one comes across an editorial on 23 September 1918, on the cooperative movement in Russia in *The Hindu* Although it is written with a view to show what a powerful and potent movement the cooperative movement is, it also shows that the principal aim of the Bolsheviks was to see that 'the funds of the Cooperative Bank are not used for financing private speculation or gain".

Again on 14 February 1922, the paper notes with satis-

of the Buckingham & Carnatic Mills, owned by Europeans and employing over 6,000 workers. This union was formed in March or April 1918.

The Anglo-Indian press saw "Bolshevism" in every agitation—be it for the political demand of Home Rule or the organised early labour struggles, it said that agitators, troublemakers and interested politicians have stirred up peaceful workers. But public men, political leaders were equally anxious to say that this was not Bolshevism but antagonism against government and if the government did not handle it with understanding the ground will be ready for spread of Bolshevik ideas. Yet they were not averse to attempt to know more about Lenin and about Bolshevik Russia from all available sources. Most of the sources available to them were the articles that appeared in the foreign press, mainly British. Much of it was anti-Bolshevik, but in the midst of it all there were a few facts that filtered through and out of this confused medley of fantastic stories, the significant thing is that something did appear about Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution.

ON LENIN AND HIS LEADERSHIP

Thus the *Indian Review*, a monthly magazine, carries an article in its June 1918 issue entitled "Trotsky and Lenin". It is made up out of reports in the foreign press; for it talks of what the organ of Italian socialism says, what an American writer says, what the *Current Opinion* says, what even, what the London Tory *Post* and the London *Mail* says; and it is interesting to note that it concludes thus: "For one thing, the first British idea of Lenin and the men around him as irresponsible and ignorant blatherskites, used by Germans as paid instruments, had to be abandoned even by the 'Tory' London *Post*—We must not dismiss Lenin, etc., as men of no account. The denunciation of him in Anglo-Indian press as a hired tool of the German is too preposterous to be denied."

The Hindu published an article on 27 May 1921 on "The Leadership of Lenin—His Strategic Retreat" by a special correspondent of *Manchester Guardian* and a full text of

Rev J. H. Holmes's speech on the three great world leaders including Lenin on 4 June 1921, and an article on Lenin from the London *Times* in its issue dated 23 May 1923—this was stated to be from a Russian correspondent to the *Times*. And the *Swadesamithran* published a translation of a lifesketch of Lenin by the London *Times's* correspondent in its issue dated 3 May 1919 and the introductory passage to the publication of the translation says: "The present regime in Russia has been termed Bolshevist and a lot of horrible news has been spread about them. Here we give a sketch of Lenin's life and his principles." *The Hindu* published in February 1924 the "Life-Sketch of Lenin" by Arthur Ransome in *Manchester Guardian* in two parts shortly after Lenin's death. Thus apart from the references made to Lenin in the course of the publication of general news items, specifically some attempt had been made to give to the reading public an idea of the personality of this great figure, the dominant figure—the maker of the Russian revolution.

The first biography of Lenin to appear in the South in the form of a booklet was written in English by G. V. Krishna Rao. The first edition of this book was published by him from Guntur in the Navayuga Prachuralaya and a second edition with a chapter on "Lenin and Gandhi" from Madras (Ganesh & Co.). *The Hindu* in a review of this book published on 26 November 1921 states: "Lenin is among the great names that resound throughout the world at this hour and great is the curiosity of men to know what sort of man he is... There is a character sketch of him which shows that he is not quite the monster he is often painted. There is also an appendix containing extracts from his writings." Mitrokhin, the Soviet scholar, has already referred to this booklet in his book *Everest among Men*. The biography has for its sources the reviews that had appeared in the *Guardian* of a few books that had been published in England. What is of significance is that Krishna Rao felt bold enough to bring out a publication on Lenin and it should have served the needs of at least some people who thirsted for a better knowledge of Lenin, than all the scrappy material that appeared in the press of that time. It

represents an attempt to fulfil a need And the fact that it contains the thesis of Lenin 'On Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship" to the first congress of the Third International and also an article "On Bolshevism" by Lenin is evidence of the author's appreciation of the communist viewpoint

I would say that this attempt to give a character sketch of Lenin in the press stems from the tendency of men in general to look for the men who made history, of an urge to read and understand the Russian revolution in terms of its leading personality

Analysing these references to Lenin we can see that most of them emphasise the greatness of the personality, some have caught the point that despite all the attempts at slandering him and all the attempts to overthrow that regime, the Soviet revolution not only withstood these attacks but had emerged stronger and more lasting and attributed it to the skill and intelligence and the greatness of Lenin there is a perception of the fact that the revolution which was carried through under his leadership was a revolution that had either fundamentally changed the social structure, or had for its object such a change and it was bent upon carrying out that change Only those who worked among the labouring classes like Dr Varadarajulu Naidu and Singaravelu emphasise that he stood for the worker, for abolition of exploitation Singaravelu's tribute in the *Labour Kishan Gazette* is noteworthy in that he lays his finger on the key fact that he (Lenin) succeeded in rendering this social wrong (exploitation of the many by the few) impossible in his own land

A CONGRESS DISTRICT COMMITTEE'S TRIBUTE

It strikes one as something strange that in spite of the number of strikes that took place in this period, the number of unions that were formed and the few labour conferences held at which several labour unions were represented, that one does not come across any resolution of greetings to the Soviet Union or of condolence on the death of Lenin It is however noteworthy that one comes across a report of one

meeting held under the auspices of a Congress committee—the Nellore District Congress Committee (Nellore is a district headquarters in the present Andhra Pradesh)—to mourn the death of Lenin The meeting was addressed by the secretary of the District Congress Committee V Raghaviah and the report says that he talked at length on the great qualities of Lenin at the end of which a resolution of condolence on the great leader's death was passed Vemalaganti Raghaviah was a Congress MLA I contacted this gentleman through a friend and he was kind enough to send me a note on what influenced him to speak on Lenin and I give the following extracts from his note

"Lenin as I Pictured for Myself"

'The year was 1924 I organised a public meeting a couple of hundreds of Nellore citizens gathered heard me speaking on the life and achievements of Lenin The small audience silently listened to me though a few were visibly moved by my narration of the great Soviet leader's struggles and travails and the ultimate and unfortunate demise of the great and unequalled leader of the suffering humanity .

"Regard and admiration were kindled in me after reading the *Ten Days that Shook the World* written by two American authors who lived and witnessed the proletarian revolution organised by the great Soviet leader under the direct inspiration of his 'Guru' Karl Marx—the earliest liberator in modern times of downtrodden humanity This very captivating book was smuggled for me into the Vellore Central Jail where I was spending my one year's SI in 1921 22 on a charge of sedition against the then British Indian administration Immediately after release I purchased fifteen copies of this very interesting book and circulated the same among many Congress workers in and out of jail

"I still hold Lenin in great veneration how he toiled so much and so effectively to uplift the helpless, the oppressed and the exploited in the past few centuries

'I am a fervent follower of Mahatma Gandhi and see no inconsistency in appreciating the historical (sic) service rendered by Lenin in the cause of the common man"

That he had been able to collect a few hundred people at that time and that he had the urge to pay this tribute to Lenin is testimony enough of the impact of Lenin on one who took part in the struggle for national freedom under Gandhiji's leadership

A NEW TREND IS BORN

The impact of all this did begin to take root among some people—although they were few—who sought to put forward a new programme for the workers and kisans of the land Already in December 1922, we find a communication from one M P S Velayutham to the *Swadesamithran* in which he instances sympathy for the Indian struggle for freedom from abroad, and gives the following extract from a letter received from Abani Mukherji from Berlin

I have learnt from the great Lenin that if we are to struggle for the toiling masses, we should become one of them Many have struggled to change the economic structure in Europe Mahatma Gandhi has emphasised discipline Both these qualities are there in Lenin That is the reason for his success If we are to win, we should follow our leader"

And this is followed by the celebration of May Day in 1923 in Madras by workers' rallies on that day at two places—one at the Triplicane Beach and another at the High Court Beach—the latter, an enthusiastic gathering of workers according to *The Hindu*, addressed by Singaravelu at which he explained the aims, objects and programme of a new party called the 'Hindustan Labour and Kisan Party' *The Hindu* carries a report of nearly one column on the two meetings and the manifesto The Triplicane Beach meeting was addressed by M P S Velayutham, Krishnaswami Sarma and Subramanya Siva, who were very ardent and sincere Congress workers of that period And this is followed by the following telegram to the AICC sent by Singaravelu on 24 May 1923

Pray resolve immediate civil resistance—by inflicting loss on enemy, rather than self suffering—Swaraj by penance futile, impossible—make Mahatmaji's release national issue

—for reopening campaign... organise mass labour cooperation... Keep battle going till emancipation—stop Shuddhi—Muslim unity indispensable."

As far as one could see this represents a distinctly new trend in the national movement. Its significance lies in the fact that there is a consciousness that if workers are to have real freedom it is essential that they should have a separate organisation of their own, that neither the Congress nor the Swaraj Party can really fight for their—the workers'—freedom. Singaravelu presided over the first Communist Conference in India in December 1925. Unfortunately this beginning of a movement of a political party of the workers and peasants did not progress far and the nationalist press appears to have either lost touch with it or found nothing worth reporting or giving publicity.

LECTURES ON RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Apart from the interest in Lenin as a great personality and a world figure, there has been a continuing interest in the Soviet revolution and its fortunes, its ideals and objectives. This is seen not only in the editorial comments in the nationalist press on important occasions but also in the lectures that have been delivered specifically about Russia, the Russian revolution and its lessons, etc.

But that there was some interest among the intelligentsia to know more about Russia and discuss about it can be seen in the fact that there is news of two lectures, one in 1921 and another in 1923, relating to Bolshevism and Russian revolution. As early as on 23 October 1918, *The Hindu* carried an announcement of a lecture to be delivered by the Headmaster of Hindu High School, Triplicane, on "Socialism and Its Implications", but unfortunately the lecture has not been reported. In August 1921, a lecture by Dr John Matthai on the "Theory of Bolshevism" has been reported and in 1923, there was a lecture on "The Russian Revolution and Its Lessons" by Principal M. Rathnaswami at the YMIA on 30 November 1923, in which he tries to state that the Bolshevik theory has been unsuccessful in practice but admits that Lenin and the Bolsheviks faced a

very severe trial in the first few years and showed that they had the capacity to withstand it

On 26 November 1925, the *Swadesamithran* published an extract from an article of C V Raman, the distinguished scientist, praising the stability of the Soviet regime and the attention and care paid by it to education and science

The English reading public was but a fraction, an infinitesimal fraction, of the people of the land But one has to bear in mind that the greater number of political leaders were intellectuals who had their education in English and the seething ferment and idealism were widespread among them It is curious to note that the *Labour Kishan Gazette* was brought out in English

One reason why literature in English has been prominent could be the state of literacy in our land The few that had the benefit of education found it easier to recapitulate what they read in English itself rather than make the effort to make it available in the mother tongue, the language of the people Even the Indian language press shaped itself on the model of the English newspapers It did not reflect fully the needs of the common people and served a class of people in the rural parts and the semiurban areas, a leisured class that had no great ambition to have higher education but was satisfied with a smattering of English that would enable them to follow the spoken or written word and for the rest, they preferred to have their knowledge of the affairs of the world in their mother tongue And the newspapers which catered mainly to the educated intelligentsia largely of the upper classes could not neglect fully the thoughts and happenings of the lower" classes Therefore the absence of any reports about the reaction amongst the workers and ordinary people of the land to the events of the Russian revolution could not be taken to mean that there was absolutely no reaction amongst them or that there was worthwhile reaction among them

The effect of the Russian revolution on the national movement in the South may be broadly divided into three types

(1) A vague reference to the toppling of crowns and

empires, the consciousness that something remarkable had been effected and it was not confined to Russia alone

(2) Utilising the charge of Bolshevism made by Anglo Indian press, to repudiate it, but stressing the fact that if the British overlords were not reasonable and sensible in their approach to the Indian question, they would be helping the Bolshevik doctrine to strike root among the people, i e use it as a lever to press for the changes they were asking for

(3) A desire to refute the charge that they (the Indian nationalists) were Bolsheviks, who believed in anarchy and violence one finds an editorial comment angrily refuting the stories about Moscow gold playing a role in this land, the *Daily Telegraph* story of Lenin and Zinoviev having established contact with Gandhi, promising aid to the national liberation movement

OTHER PRESS REPORTS

But while they were keen on repudiating the story of influence of Moscow, nevertheless, they gave some publicity to the other side of the picture as well In addition to the articles from *The Times* that were published about the Bolshevik regime's drawbacks, etc the press carried also some other reports that showed that things in Russia under Bolshevism were not so bad as it was said to be Under this, we can instance certain reports from the press in America, of reports of London meetings of Indians addressed by Rajni Palme Dutt, of the reception given to S Kasturiranga Iyengar, *The Hindu* editor, by the Workers' Welfare League of India, London, urging him to work for the formation of trade unions, etc Some propaganda material did come through to India In an ironical reference to the attempts of the British imperialists to ban news about Russia the writer of a feature article in the *Swadesamithran* on 4 November 1920 refers to the ban on the entry of the magazine *Soviet Russia* by the government and 'the credit for this land not becoming Bolshevik should go the ability of the bureaucrats who rule India" Even *The Hindu* wrote in one of its subeditorials, on 15 June 1922, refuting the

charge of Moscow's influence, thus That Bolshevik propaganda is being carried on everybody is perfectly aware We ourselves have been flooded with their literature and these efforts generally find their way into the waste paper basket But it is monstrous and wicked falsehood to assert that any great national movement has been financed by Russian gold'

The British rulers by their censorship and interested propaganda overshot the mark and intensified among the nationalists a desire to know more about this Bolshevism The nationalist movement which was vociferous, in its own way, about its being noncommunist was not totally anti-Russian either and even correctly assessed certain features

TWO IMPORTANT LIES REFUTED

Two important items of the false propaganda against the Bolsheviks that they had made women common to all men and that they were persecuting religion were not only not believed, but were refuted well by the two nationalist dailies, *The Hindu* in English and the *Swadesamithran* in Tamil

On the question of the abominable falsehood about the enjoyment of women in common I have already drawn attention to the fact that Bharathi had nailed it as a lie Writing again editorially under general notes the *Swadesamithran* wrote on 13 April 1921 thus 'In Russia and elsewhere the principle of equality of women with men would mean that women will be treated as equal human beings and never the idea that they are to be regarded as possessions If the doctrine of equality is fully established there will be an equal code of morality for men and women and chastity will be the law for man as well as woman To imagine that women will become common property is nothing but unadulterated ignorance'

Regarding the story of religious persecution spread by the imperialist press when a few priests were arrested and sentenced for antisocial acts the *Swadesamithran* wrote a long editorial on 10 April 1923 refuting *The Times of India* In the course of it, the editorial states When the priests o

religion begin to interfere in political matters leaving aside their religion, then that is no longer a simple matter of religion. If on the basis of their being religious leaders, they claim special rights which do not exist for other subjects that is preposterous. The great ideals and the efforts of the Bolsheviks to realise them are far better than all the intricate religious practices that the religious heads preach."

The Hindu published the following item under the 'Gleanings from Urdu Press" in its issue of 12 May 1923:

"*Zamindar*, Lahore, in writing about Bolshevism and christianity, commenting on the arrest and imprisonment of christian priests on the basis of political crimes in Russia has said: 'But what evidence is there to prove that the priests in their political capacities are guiltless? It seems probable, nay certain, that the priests under the veil of religion have attempted to ruin the Bolshevik government and establish monarchy.'"

LENIN—ONE OF THE GREATEST LEADERS

It is when we come to the notices that have appeared in the South Indian press at the time of Lenin's death that one sees the universal acceptance of Lenin as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, leaders of the world! I have been able to see the editorial comment of *The Hindu* and the *Swadesamithran*. Mitrokhin and Devendra Kaushik have given extracts from the reports of the English press and the Indian language press from the government sources, in their book *Lenin—His Image in India*. I give below a few extracts from these tributes:

'With his death is removed one of the greatest personalities of the modern world. Even were it true that he was all that he was painted like, the fact will not be gainsaid that his was a great career, his achievement one of the most amazing that human greatness has achieved. (*The Hindu*, 23 January 1924)

"The determination and perseverance of Lenin in his ideals are immeasurable" (*Swadesamithran*, 25 January 1924)

"Lenin must be pronounced to rank the highest, only second to Mahatma Gandhi, whom the world recognises as the greatest man" (*Sampad Abhyudhaya*).

"Whether they agree with his views or not, wise persons cannot but admit that he was one of those persons who enjoyed world fame... There is no doubt that Lenin who was the author of all this great change would occupy a permanent place in the world's history" (*Andhra Patrika*, 23 January 1924).

"There will be no one who will not lament the death of Lenin—one of the greatest of world's men" (*Swarajya Patrika*, Bezwada, 27 January 1924).

"The name of Lenin will be for many generations to come—a guiding example to the advocates of reform" (*Krishna Patrika*, Masulipatnam, 26 January 1924).

"The great man who established a unique communal (sic) government is dead" (*Desasevakan*, Pondicherry, 29 January 1924).

"Though Lenin is dead it is certain that his principles will stand for ever" (*Tamilnadu*, Madras, 27 January 1924).

"A great man, next only to Mahatma Gandhi, is dead. That man is Lenin who gave all his life for the poor till the very last" (Dr Varadarajulu Naidu in a speech at a labour conference in Madras).

LENIN: THE PRACTICAL REALISATION OF AN IDEAL

"Great indeed was he, for whatever may be the sins or virtues of the Bolshevists, it was not such a common man's doings to have led such a gigantic revolution with unquestioned success over a wide area of land, a revolution which in the range of its sweep and completeness of its breach with existing moorings in society must be regarded as perhaps the greatest recorded in history" (*The Hindu*, 23 January 1924).

"Lenin is a man who has brought about a great change in contemporary history" (*Swadesamithran*, 25 January 1924).

"Lenin said that the ultimate evolution of the human race may culminate in socialism. This has been Lenin's ideal for

the attainment of which he devoted his life and won a victory" (*Congress*, Rajahmundry, 7 February 1924)

'The world cannot forget his great powers of vision, his dexterity in action and his ideals of equality" (*Krishna Patrika*, 26 January 1924)

In his cherished ambition of seeing equal justice done to all classes of human beings and in his fearless employment of all kinds of resources to see his ideals achieved Lenin stands unrivalled in the whole of humanity He is sure to go down to posterity as one of the greatest saviours of Europe and he will be worshipped in every hearth and home as a revered saint" (*Sampad Abhyudhaya*)

'But the doctrine established by him is an incomparable one, and we hope that his principles will become firmly established" (*Desasevakan*, Pondicherry, 29 January 1924)

"His methods are not to our liking But his ideal is truly great The day will come when despite all the capitalist propaganda the world will realise that he was one of those that struggled to save the world" (Dr Varadarajulu Naidu in a labour conference mentioned above)

Quite apart from all these tributes is the one paid by Singaravelu in his *Labour Kishan Gazette* He says 'The world, the workers' world, is poorer by the passing away of its great teacher and redeemer While others were pursuing vague speculations as to the cause of misery and its cessation, N Lenin found that the true hethu or cause of world's sorrows lies in the exploitation of the many by the few and he succeeded in rendering this social wrong impossible in his own country " This represents the working-class point of view and has laid the finger on the significance of the Russian revolution as the revolution that abolished exploitation in that land

* * *

Apart from the articles and news items, books also appear to have been available There is a book on Karl Marx written by Dr Hardayal Other books advertised are *Through Bolshevik Russia* by Mrs Phillip Snowden, *Land Revolution in Russia* by Lenin, *Six Weeks in Russia* by

A Ransome, *Bolshevik Theory* by Postgate and *Bolshevism at Work* by Goode All these were books advertised for sale by one bookseller in Madras

To sum up, the search and survey of the materials so far gathered about the impact of Lenin and the Russian revolution in the South shows very clearly that despite all the censorship as well as the anti Bolshevik handouts and propaganda, the public did get some idea of both of them, that this idea strengthened the anti-imperialist urge of the nationalists and created among some of the intelligentsia the feeling that the fight for social justice is going to be an important aspect of future politics and that among at least a few who worked among the workers an attempt was made to show that the revolution led by Lenin was a movement of the workers and the downtrodden for their true liberation and the establishment of a new society without exploitation.

Burma's Fight for Freedom and the Unforgettable Indian Comrades

Gautam Chattopadhyay

The British imperialists first thrust out their bloody talons towards Burma in 1821-22 when during the First Anglo-Burmese war, they wrested Arakan. Then, throughout the nineteenth century, step by step, the screw was tightened, the final act of annexation of entire Burma taking place as late as 1885. In all the acts of this sordid drama, India was the operational base of British imperialism and Indian troops served as the main cannon-fodder. Gurkha, Garhwali and other hillmen soldiers played a decisive role in the final conquest of Burma. There were also sappers and miners from South India.

From the close of the nineteenth and opening of the twentieth century, Indian soldiers behaved in Burma like a typical army of occupation. This "superior" and arrogant attitude was also the hallmark of middle-class Indians who came to Burma early in the twentieth century. The Burmese on their part maintained an attitude of sullen aloofness towards the Indians, generally identifying them with the British conquerors.

An Indian revolutionary, who was also one of the founders of the Communist Party of Burma, commented thus:

Indian labour. A group of thikadars recruited them from the poverty-stricken districts of Nellore and Nalgonda in Andhra, as also from Orissa. Usually, these labourers were put on a ship at Gopalpur and then packed off to Burma. As a result of this, these labourers were largely under the iron grip of the thikadars, who in turn were linked with the British and other millowners. Right up to 1930, the workers in saw mills, rice mills, refineries, oil-fields, etc. as well as dock workers, day-labourers and even rickshaw-pullers in the cities were almost wholely Indians—mostly Telugus and Oriyas. The khalasis and laskars in the river steam service were also Indians, mainly Bengali Muslims from Chittagong and Noakhali.

Up to 1930, the Burmese kept aloof from the Indians but during the great depression of 1930, thousands of Burmese pauperised peasants came to the cities in search of jobs and found that these had all been filled by the Indians. Moreover, jobs could be obtained only through the thikadars or maistries, as they were called, and the Burmese had no money to pay to them their salamis As the labourers were mostly South Indians, the pent-up anger of the Burmese exploded in a great anti-Indian riot, particularly against the Telugu labourers. It was then for the first time that some Burmese entered the docks as labourers. In sharp contrast to the uneducated Indian labourers, these Burmese were mostly literate. This was due to the fact that all Burmese had to stay compulsorily in monasteries for a stipulated period of time and the priests, the pongyis, imparted rudimentary education to them. Therefore the pongyis were the natural leaders of the Burmese people.

The people of Burma never accepted British rule in a docile manner. Like the Indian patriots, forward-looking elements in Burma too dreamed of a revolution against the colonial rule.

The first uprising of the Burmese patriots was the Zalun or Myoka Rebellion of 1913. The British nipped the rebellion in the bud and executed the two ringleaders—Gamon Saya and Mya Hrongyi.[3] Then during the early years of the first

3 Ghosh, K. C., *Roll of Honour*, Calcutta, 1965, p 345

world war, the Kachins of Burma rose in rebellion under the leadership of Nga Po Thaik and Nga Kyi. For a long period of time (1914-15), they kept the British at bay but by 1915 the rebellion was crushed by the force of British arms. The two leaders and two other Kachin rebels were sentenced to death in September 1915.[4] Round about the same time, another abortive anti-British rebellion took place in the Shan state of Burma, known as the Kamaing Rebellion, where also four Shan ringleaders were sentenced to death.[5]

There was no actual contact between these Burmese rebels and the Bengal or Punjab revolutionaries, yet the British government suspected that rebellions and unrest in Burma were due to their activities. In fact, Indian revolutionaries were using Burma as a centre for their secret activities and, in 1915 and 1916, the British launched two successive conspiracy cases against a number of Indians belonging to the Ghadar Party and executed a number of them including Sohanlal, Harnam Singh, Mujtaba Hussain and many others.[6] A leaflet was produced as an exhibit by the British, which ran as follows.

"Wanted—Brave soldiers to stir up Ghadar (revolt) in India, Pay—Death; Prize—Martyrdom, Pension—Liberty; Field of battle—India."[7]

A NEW EPOCH OPENS (1930-39)

Notwithstanding these heroic revolts, the Indian and Burmese patriots as yet walked the revolutionary road at arm's length from each other But the situation started changing after 1930. A mass peasant rebellion broke out in 1931 in the district of Tharrawaddy (which is the distorted form of the word Saraswati in Pali). The revolt spread to the adjoining districts. This rebellion was extremely bloody and it was directed primarily against British rule in Burma but it was also against landlords and moneylenders. This uprising had the tacit backing of the pongyis and had at its

4. *Ibid*, pp 350-51.
5. *Ibid*, p. 351.
6. *Ibid*, pp 353-58
7. *Sedition Committee Report*, Calcutta, 1918, p 168.

of Burma This strike was initiated by the Burmese students and its leader was the redoubtable Aung San The Bengali revolutionary students had by now veered towards socialism and they also came in contact with Aung San During this same period, workers of oil-refineries also went on strike and marched over 200 miles to come to Rangoon from the Yenangyaung oil field This created a tremendous impression on all students—Indians and Burmese alike—and they went on a solidarity strike

Hari Narayan Ghosal was by now the leader of the Indian leftwingers and they all joined Aung San's Students' Union and participated in the students' strike This was 1938 and Jawaharlal Nehru was going to China When he came to Rangoon, the leftist group met him and after a talk with him, they became even firmer socialists with communist leanings Urgent need to contact the illegal Communist Party of India was felt very sharply then and it was decided to go to India for that purpose Let us now, once again, continue the thread in the words of one of the founders of the BCP.

'We collected some money and decided to go to India to contact the illegal CPI With this aim in view, Ghosal, Amar De and myself came to Dacca (now capital of East Pakistan G C) There, in a teashop we met an old revolutionary contact of ours, who in turn introduced us to a corporation schoolteacher—Latika Das[10] She advised us to go to Calcutta and meet a certain leader of the CPI called Dr Ranen Sen[11] We took her advice and boarded the steamer at Narayangunge There we met a smallish chap, a communist, also going to Calcutta by the same steamer This was the redoubtable Gopal Basak,[12] an accused in the

10 Latika Das was a schoolteacher and one of the early women-organisers of the CPI She was killed in police firing in Bowbazar Street, Calcutta on 27 April 1949 while leading a women's procession for the release of political prisoners

11 Ranen Sen, joined the CPI in the early thirties and became a member of the Central Committee of the party in 1933 now secretary of the CPI's West Bengal unit

12 Gopal Basak a key cadre of the revolutionary Anushilan Party of Dacca, was attracted towards communism by Nalini Gupta in 1922 23

Meerut Conspiracy Case and also a builder of the Red Flag trade union movement at Narayangunge. On the way, Basak told us grippingly the whole story of the Meerut Case and also gave us a realistic picture of the then Indian communist movement.

In Calcutta, we went to an address at Chetla, given to us by Latika Das where we met Dr Ranen Sen—he had just returned from a factory gate meeting of workers at Bhartia Iron and Steel Works at Ballygunge. Ranen Sen listened to our problems and advised us to go to Tripuri[13] where the annual session of the Indian National Congress was in the offing and where all the CPI leaders were also assembled. Ranen Sen introduced us to a comrade, who was also a delegate to the Congress, Ardhansu Mitra. Comrade Ardhansu was a wonderful person and he gate crashed with us to Tripuri, where we were able to attend both the subjects committee meetings and the open session. M. N. Roy's performance at Tripuri was rather disappointing to us but CPI's Dutt Mazumdar's[14] oration was quite impressive. We also met there CPI leaders, R. D. Bharadwaj, Dr G. Adhikari and P. C. Joshi. We had long talks with them and it was decided that on our return to Burma, we shall launch a Communist Party there and, if necessary, come to India again for fraternal advice."[15]

Late in 1939 the second world war broke out and early in 1940 in Kamayut, a suburb of Rangoon, in a "ghost-infested house" was founded the Burmese Communist Party, attended among others by Thakin Soe, Aung San, Than Tun, Hari Narayan Ghosal, Amar Nag, Amar De, Subodh

13 Tripuri refers to the historic session of the Indian National Congress in 1939 where the united leftist forces headed by the CPI had managed to get Subhas Chandra Bose elected as Congress President defeating the candidate of the establishment, Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

14 Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar, member of the CC, CPI and party's spokesman in the AICC for a short while. Expelled in 1939 for violating party's discipline—later joined the Congress as also the anticommunist bandwagon.

15 Interview with Madhab Munsi, 18 December 1968.

Mukherji, Bejoy Sen, Madhab Munsi, Ba Hein, Gopal Munsi, Kanti Roy, Aurobindo Dutta and others Aung San was elected the first general secretary of the party[16] The first task of this new party was to translate CPI's basic theses, *The Proletarian Path*, into Burmese and arrange for its mass reproduction

A few words need be said at this stage on the role of Aung San He was the most outstanding leader of the Do Bama (Our Burma) party and the unchallenged leader of the student-youth of Burma He was in 1940 sincerely with the Burmese Communist Party (BCP), at the same time, Aung San had vital links also with the Japanese, which he kept hidden from the other communist comrades Yet, when in 1940 the Soviet-Finnish war broke out, Aung San was in a hospital but he readily lent his name to a pamphlet, where the BCP defended fully the Soviet action In January 1941 the British issued a warrant of arrest against Aung San and he promptly went underground Soon afterwards, he secretly left for Japan and that ended Aung San's formal connection with the BCP

The small core of communists in Burma divided up their jobs—Thakin Soe, Than Tun and Ghosal concentrated on keeping and extending contacts among Burmese nationalists while Madhab Munsi, Gopal Munsi, Barin De, Aurobindo Dutta, Amar De, Sadhan Banerji and others started mass trade union activities The first Red Flag trade unions of Burma were built in 1940 41 in the timber mills on the riverside of Rangoon In East Rangoon, these young communists rented a small room and in the light of a kerosene lamp enrolled members by the thousand The labourers were mostly of Telugu origin while the Bengali communists could at best talk in broken Hindi The bosses' touts who had so long monopolised sham unions were soon hooted out and it was a big day for the communists, when young Madhab Munsi was elected secretary of the Rangoon Corporation Scavengers' Union from its annual general meeting The Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation—strong-

16 Based on information given to the author by three pioneers of the BCP—Madhab Munsi Sadhan Banerji and Barin De in 1968-69

hold of the British monopolists—was also stormed and a union formed there with Bejoy Sen elected as its secretary In the words of one of the union leaders of the time

It was a grand scene, when we saw the Red Flag fluttering in the hands of thousands of workers of the BBTC Union This was the company which had paved the way for the final annexation of Burma by the British in 1885, and half a century later, it was here that the communists planted the Red Flag, heralding the coming of the Burmese revolution'[17]

Emboldened by early success, the youthful Indian comrades together with their Burmese compatriots started going to the other side of the river at Syriam on holidays Here they came in contact with a Telugu worker called Survanarayan, who soon joined the BCP and used to translate into Telugu the speeches of the communist organisers Survanaravan remained loyal to the Red Flag all through the years of Japanese occupation and was there as late as 1948, when one of the pioneers of BCP met him again[18]

The British imperialists now became seriously alarmed and in February 1941 swooped down upon the communists of Burma In one massive raid, they arrested Madhab Munsi, Amar Nag, Amar De, Barin De, Kanti Roy, Gopal Munsi Aurobindo Dutta, Subodh Mukherji, Dinesh Bose, Thin Tun, Thakin Soe Sadhan Banerji and after some time Hari Narayan Ghosal At first all of us were kept in the Insein Central Jail We lived a full life—regular political discussions, classes on History of CPSU(B) and militant songs in the evening But soon the British dispersed us all over Burma Ghosal, Subodh Mukherji and Amar De were sent to Henzada Jail Amar Nag and Gopal Munsi were kept detained at Nyaunglebin, Aurobindo Dutta at Moulmeingyun, while I was interned at a small place called Ma ubin Here, under strict police watch, I had to spend several months, with old *Police Gazette* as my only reading material One day, in a back number of 1940, I came across

17 Interview with Barin De 30 March 1969
18 *Ibid*

the name of a communist absconder of Bengal, with a price on his head—the name was Somnath Lahiri."[19]

On 22 June 1941, Hitler attacked the USSR. The young communists of Burma were thrown into confusion. A collective discussion became necessary. Feigning illness, some leading communists came to Rangoon Jail hospital and after discussion came to the conclusion that the best way to help USSR and defeat fascism was to step up the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of British imperialism in Burma.

In December 1941, Japan declared war on England and USA. By early 1942, the British in Burma were on the run. Aung San came back with the invading Japanese Army at the head of a Burmese Liberation Army and the Burmese cooperated enthusiastically with him. The Indians fled en masse—especially the educated middle class, tied as they were to the chariot-wheels of the British colonial administration. Situation for the handful of Indian communists, rotting in British prisons or in internment, was pretty desperate. So, in separate batches, they decided to escape to India for the time being, because arrest by the Japanese would mean certain death.

THE ESCAPE TO INDIA

Escape to India, in February 1941, was no longer easy. The sea-route was closed and escape was possible only through the dangerous land-route over mountains and through forests. Thousands trudged along this route and for many the trek ended in death. The young communists were of tougher mettle and survived this journey of horror but it was, in any case, an experience of a lifetime. We give below accounts of two members of two different batches:

"Amar Nag and Gopal Munsi were in Central Burma on the main railway artery and saw the collapse of British rule in Burma much more vividly. They contacted me and Aurobindo Dutta and we met each other late in January 1942. Amar Nag was already a doctor and he was always a

19 Interview with Madhab Munsi, 18 December 1968.

very strict comrade. He had all four of us inoculated against cholera (an act that later on was to save our lives). At Kalewa, Gobinda, younger brother of Sadhan Banerji, joined us. Unfortunately he was not inoculated and on the route he was attacked by cholera. No medicine was available and hardly any drinking water. Amar Nag tried every conceivable desperate remedial measure but Gobinda died before our very eyes, as did so many hundreds of other unknown Indians. We also did not hope to live but trudged along through dense forests and ragged mountains At long last, after two weeks, we reached Imphal, from there to Kohima and then to Dacca—reaching Calcutta quite some time later. But the main thing was we were safe and alive and learnt that most of the other comrades too were able to reach India."[20]

Ghosal, Sadhan Banerji, Amar De and others were in jail when Japanese air-bombing destroyed the prison. They miraculously escaped with their lives and after hazardous trek across the death-trail reached India. One of the last to leave Burma was Barin De. Here is his account:

"Rangoon was occupied by the Japanese on 7 March 1942. I had lost all contacts with other comrades What shall I do? I decided to come to India Early in April, when I passed Mandalay, it was in flames due to Jap air-attack. I knew Kanti Roy was in Shwebo Jail. But when I reached the spot, I found the jail in shambles (later I came to know that Kanti had escaped). So I started the trek alone. Many days I had to step over heaps of dead bodies strewn all over the route. I had a precious flask of water and this perhaps saved me. When I was near Imphal, the city was bombed. On 6 May 1942, I reached the Koranji camp in India, after a total trek of 210 miles."[21]

By the middle of 1942, the Bengali comrades of Burma, except Subodh Mukherji (who had stayed behind), had been reunited in Calcutta and for the time being were working inside the CPI. The comrades from Burma, after their

20 Ibid

21. Interview with Barin De, 30 March 1969.

death defying trek to India, were entitled to relax for a time, but they did not do so Like true Bolsheviks, they jumped into diverse activities of the CPI Amar Nag, who was a trained doctor, in fact took charge of the field work of the Bengal Medical Relief and Coordination Committee and together with Dr B K Bose (of the Congress Medical Mission to China) organised spectacular medical relief to the famine-and pestilence hit people of Bengal Nag also did very effective work in the Tramway Workers' Union Barin De and Aurobindo Dutta went off to Tatanagar to organise the workers against one of the monopolist bosses of India (and to this day, Barin De is steadfastly at that post) The Munsi brothers—Madhab and Gopal—joined the antifascist activities in Calcutta, while Sadhan Banerji became a key organiser of the Calcutta Tramway Workers' Union Ghosal lent his services in organising the Red Guard volunteer corps of the CPI But mostly they pined to return to Burma and renew the struggle there

Meanwhile, the situation in Burma started changing, together with the change in the fortunes of war By 1944 the axis powers were being defeated everywhere and in Burma, Aung San and his nationalist comrades were thoroughly disillusioned with the Japanese Gradually, a resistance movement against the Japanese started taking shape in Burma The Burmese Communist Party, now headed by Thakin Soe and Than Tun, was the first in the field The BCP by now had a strong base among the peasantry, especially in Central Burma and they organised guerilla armies against the Japanese Then there was Aung San and his Burmese Army, which later took the name of Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (*PVO*) *They had strong* and extensive base among the rural middle class and the urban intelligentsia Then there was also the weak Burmese bourgeoisie The climax came when Aung San openly gave the call for a mass armed revolt against the Japanese from a mass rally held near a famous Pagoda in Rangoon in March 1945 On 27 March the BCP also gave the call for armed uprising and together they dealt heavy blows to the Jap invaders To the average Burman, therefore, when the second world war ended, Aung San was the greatest

national hero, and Than Tun, the BCP leader, was a close number two

The panicky flight of the British imperialists at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1942 had irreparably damaged British prestige in Burma The heroic resistance war waged against the Japanese in Burma by the various antifascist Burmese parties had instilled the Burmese people with new confidence The wars of liberation in Indochina and Indonesia gave them further courage Matters came to a head when the colonial government of Dorman Smith was shifted from Simla to Rangoon The Burmese patriotic forces united to form the Anti-Fascist Organisation (AFO) Very soon, the AFO put forward the demand of complete independence for Burma In August 1945, the AFO held its historic congress, where the famous Naythucyin resolutions were passed—the main demands voiced there being withdrawal of British White Paper on Burma, immediate formation of a provisional national government, holding of general election based on universal adult suffrage to elect a Constituent Assembly which would draw up the constitution of free Burma In this conference the name of the AFO was changed to AFPFL (Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League)

Here is a description of the then situation in Burma by a founder of the BCP

"Discontent continued to mount and the AFPFL developed into a mass organisation of tremendous strength and prestige In January 1946, the AFPFL held its congress, where the national aspirations of the Burmese people were more concretely formulated The congress conceived Burma as a free republic, completely severing all links with the British Its programme included confiscation of all British property, nationalisation of land and key industries and building up of a people's militia The influence of the communists inside the AFPFL was manifest Communist leader Than Tun was the secretary-general of the AFPFL "[22]

Put on the defensive, the British imperialists fell back on

[22] Sharma M (Pseudonym used by Madhab Munsi) "Civil War in Burma", *Nation* Calcutta 26 June 1949

their favourite weapon—divide and rule. Anticommunism was whipped up and many of the pioneers of the BCP say that the young militant communist movement fell into the trap by registering sectarian response to provocative gestures. Soon the mighty AFPFL split and Aung San entered the interim government early in 1947, without his erstwhile communist allies. The communist movement received a further setback, because Thakin Soe, the veteran leader, left the BCP and formed an "ultraleftist" Communist Party (known as the Red Flag Communist Party).

Taking advantage of this temporary split in the anti-imperialist camp, the British imperialists struck hard. In July 1947, they engineered an assassination plot and killed at one stroke Aung San and six of his topmost cabinet colleagues. The entire nation was stunned and then rumbled like a volcano about to erupt. The PVOs retained their arms and marched on the streets. The colonial rule was on its last legs. The BCP unfortunately did not give the call for seizure of power. It was on the third day after the murder, that the BCP formally started negotiations with the AFPFL for formation of a united cabinet based on a common programme.

Aung San was succeeded by the much more moderate U Nu and soon in London the Nu-Attlee Agreement was signed. The BCP criticised it severely and the united front in Burma was practically at an end. Meanwhile, most of the Indian comrades of the BCP had gone back to Burma including Hari Narayan Ghosal, Amar Nag, Amar De and Gopal Munsi and they together with Subodh Mukherji, who had stayed behind, soon occupied leading and key posts in the BCP and the TU and peasant organisations. The situation was rapidly reaching a boiling point and the final showdown was squarely on the agenda.

CIVIL WAR IN BURMA

Meanwhile the anti-imperialist forces in South-East Asia, led by communists, were trying to coordinate their forces. For that purpose a grand meeting of the anti-imperialist forces took place in Calcutta in February 1948—South-East

Asia Youth Conference Delegates came from Korea, Chi Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaya and Burma and of course Inc The thesis unanimously adopted by the conference Calcutta was that the main task of the period was launch mass armed uprising against the imperialist ov lords and their native henchmen and that the only corr form of struggle at that juncture was armed struggle the words of a western commentator

"The conference unanimously adopted a resolution su porting national liberation struggle against imperialism an indigenous and spontaneous response to existing politi and economic conditions arose in independent Burma a in colonial Malaya, within a short time of the Calcu conference"[23]

Many comrades of the BCP including Ghosal and Ar De were present at the conference[24] After their return Burma, the BCP adopted a new militant tactical line cal "The Revolutionary Possibilities for 1948" The BCP doc ment stated

"Independence of Burma is a sham and under cover this sham, British imperialists would work a stranglehe on the defence and the economic life of the country T AFPFL by accepting and acquiescing is lending itself a tool of the British imperialists To sum up, our cent slogans become the following No support to the prese government, national rising and setting up a peopl government"[25]

The armed uprising led by the Burmese Communist Pa started in March 1948 A pioneer of the BCP, who was CPI since 1942, temporarily went back to Burma Let listen to his eye-witness account of the uprising "Fr 23 to 25 March, the All Burma Peasants' Congress was he

23 Beloff, Max *Soviet Foreign Policy in the Far East*, Oxford U versity Press 1953

24 The author of this article was the President of the Bengal unit the All India Students Federation, the host to the SE Asia Youth C ference and as such he met both comrades H N Ghosal and Amar at Calcutta in February 1948

25 "Burma and the Insurrections", Government White Paper, R goon, 1948

at Pyinmana, the richest rice belt in Burma. In the open rally, over 100,000 peasants turned up and it was here, that Than Tun, for the first time, sharply denounced the Nu-Attlee agreement and in unmistakable terms gave the call for open mass revolt It has to be remembered here, that the BCP gave its famous call for mass uprising against the Japs on 27 March 1945 and the anniversary of that date was at hand

We came back to Rangoon on 25 March Amar Nag did not turn up at the den that night On 27 March, in the huge commemorative rally at Rangoon, called by the BCP, Than Tun repeated his call for open revolt On 28 March, at dawn, police raided our mess and arrested us—Amar De, Gopal Munsi and myself After several hours, to our surprise, we were released At night we received a chit from Ghosal 'Behave normally, open the shop as usual' I was to go back to India on 3 April but on that very morning I was arrested again and taken straight from a police station to Tharrawaddy Jail That jail had been converted into a concentration camp, both in letter and spirit There were powerful searchlights in the turret and Bren-guns were fitted into position The pick of the district leaders of the BCP and many resistance leaders were there, including Amar De, Gopal Munsi, Subodh Mukherji and myself There were all told over two thousand political prisoners in that prison, living in conditions of semi-slave labour'[26]

Meanwhile the civil war in Burma was spreading The BCP started the revolt, but soon a large section of PVO and several battalions of RBA (Revolutionary Burmese Army) joined forces and a coordinated high command was set up Large tracts in Central Burma were liberated, including many key cities The writ of the U Nu government ran only within a radius of 50 miles around Rangoon—no more Even in Rangoon, the central government rested on precarious foundations Here is a typical description of the period

'The sixth session of the Burma Parliament opened today inside the barbed wire barricaded building of the govern-

26 Interview with Barin De Calcutta 30 March 1969

ment secretariat in Rangoon . little more than half of the 225 members attended the session which was boycotted by the communists and a section of the PVO"[27]

Early in 1949, the combined revolutionary armies of Burma liberated Prome, which was only 60 miles away from Tharrawaddy News reached the political prisoners in Tharrawaddy Jail that the revolutionary army intended to liberate them Gopal Munsi, Barin De, Amar De, etc also learnt that among the leading communists with the army were some Indian comrades, one of whom was certainly Amar Nag Once again let me quote at length from the graphic account of one who was then in Tharrawaddy Jail

'Early in 1949, we had established a regular and firm clandestine contact with the leadership outside Heartening news reached us that the armies of revolution had already liberated majority of the districts of Burma and stormed most of the jails except that in Rangoon and Tharrawaddy The Karen rebels had stormed Insein Our liberation too was near at hand So we sold some belongings, including the gold-ring of Gopal Munsi and smuggled into our prison a dozen rifles, three or four sten guns and a number of khaki shorts and shirts We were informed that we would be liberated on 4 April 1949

We were tense and ready From 1 April the war of nerves started The jail authorities were feverishly active At exactly 7 p m on 3 April, three red flares went up followed by two green flares This was the prearranged signal At once, we heard tremendous noise of gun-firing Amar De exclaimed in great excitement 'The game is up for the jailers' At about 10 p m firing ceased and there was complete silence We were puzzled but dared not go out, because it was night At dawn, the jail gate opened—three men entered, followed by 50 to 60 soldiers of the revolutionary army After another half hour, our cells were unlocked and we were free

'It was then we learnt that three army units, belonging

27 *Nation* Calcutta 2 September 1948 (Despatch from Rangoon dated 31 August 1948)

to BCP, PVO and RBA had participated in our liberation and that after two hours' of fierce battle, the garrison in charge of Tharrawaddy Jail had surrendered We spent the night of 4 April also in jail, but as free men, with the jail under the control of our own revolutionary government

On the morning of 6 April, we assembled in a field There we were given arms and asked to march with a unit. After marching for a couple of hours we rested at a monastery There we met our dear old comrade Amar Nag

Thakin Soe and many of his followers were also in Tharrawaddy Jail As they had not agreed to join the revolutionary coordination, they were packed into three trucks and sent to Prome under armed escort There a fruitless negotiation was carried on for establishing a joint command with Soe's group When the talks failed, they were allowed to go away under a safe conduct agreement

'Three or four days later, the great march of the liberation army started It was a batch of about 100 and in the contingent were Amar Nag Gopal Munsi, Amar De and myself We trudged along for a week, through dense forests and across mountains, finally reaching the place where the Lower Burma Communist Party Conference was being held On our way back, we halted in Prome This city was then the headquarters of the liberation movement and the People's Administration Committee was stationed here We stayed here for nearly a month From here, the whole group marched again This time our destination was the headquarters of the BCP at Oh Shait Hlaing in the district of Pyinmana We travelled some distance in a couple of trailer trains Then for 20 miles, we crossed dense forests on the back of elephants Then after three days we reached the HQ of the BCP in a big village by the side of a river The liberation army HQ was located in a monastery We were warmly welcomed by Than Tun himself

"I was at this place for two-three months A broadcasting station had been set up there and its broadcasts were received quite clearly even in Rangoon I learnt Burmese thoroughly here and my job was to make a synopsis of international news for the party leadership While I was

here, Comrade Dimitrov died and a memorial meeting was held there"[28]

What was the condition of the liberated zones?

'For two full months, I toured a large part of the liberated area, and went to over 40 villages and the town of Pyinmana I travelled in train, on horse back, on elephant back as well as on foot The liberation army captured the town of Pyinmana after bitter and desperate battle The wife of Comrade Than Tun was in the prison—she too was liberated together with many other comrades When I reached the town, the victory celebration took place

How did the People's Administrative Committee (PAC) work? In every village, all adult people elected the local PAC and it looked after the whole village, including settling of all disputes In every village, there was a functioning branch of the All Burma Peasants' Congress Food was plentiful and money also was there Ordinary crimes were sharply on the wane The long arm of the liberation army could strike within 20 miles of Rangoon Such was the situation when I was in the liberated area from August to October 1949

Ordinarily, the relations between the three revolutionary forces—BCP PVO and RBA—were cordial but a serious military ideological dispute had arisen—whether to capture Rangoon first or whether to consolidate the liberated areas first There were also certain differences within the BCP In November 1949 I returned to Prome From there I secretly came to Rangoon and reached Calcutta on 20 January 1950'[29]

A progressive weekly, published from Bombay, wrote in this period

Actually what is happening in Burma is a process of consolidation of the People's Democratic Front (PDF) led by the working class and its party, the Communist Party The PDF is emerging stronger and its leadership extends, up to 29 March 1950, to over 71 000 square miles of terri-

28 Interview with Barin De 30 March 1969
29 *Ibid*

tory, comprising a population of seven million men or 41 per cent of Burma's total population 30

As is well known, the Burmese revolutionary movement suffered serious setbacks afterwards Many factors were responsible for that The political analysis of all that is not the aim of this article nor is the present writer competent to do so However, it is essential to record with a deep sense of sorrow the heroic and tragic death of most of the Indian comrades

Of the Indian comrades who founded the Communist Party in Burma five opted to make Burma their real mother land—Hari Narayan Ghosal Subodh Mukherji Amar Nag Gopal Munsi and Amar De

Details are lacking about their death but we have pieced together whatever we can from slender evidences Amar De died under tragic circumstances sometime in 1957 Gopal Munsi was a member of the Toungoo Regional Council in the liberated area and he was killed in an ambush by government forces in 1958 when he was leading a squad from one zone to another The news of his death was prominently flashed in the newspapers of Rangoon

Subodh Mukherji was the president of the All Burma Trade Union Congress and the government had announced a one lakh rupee reward for his capture—dead or alive He was a man of reckless courage and made frequent secret trips to Rangoon In 1959 or 1960 he was somewhere in Central Burma when a government force surprised his hideout He was killed by a havildar who chopped off his head and took it to the nearest town His severed head and the havildar's photo became frontpage news in Rangoon papers Dr Amar Nag became chief of the medical section of the BCP and he too was killed in an ambush on 9 November 1968 Ghosal was also killed but there are conflicting reports connected with the circumstances of his death

All these comrades were brilliant students who loved India and Burma with equal passion They gave up from their boyhood easy and comfortable life and identified themselves completely with the cause of the toiling masses

30 Crossroads Bombay 5 May 1950

of Burma. For nearly 20 years, the jungles of Burma was their home and the Burmese rural poor their nearest kith and kin. Whatever their political line, they never betrayed the Burmese people nor did their fidelity to the cause of the unfinished revolution in Burma ever waver.

Countless millions of Burmese and Indian youth will draw inspiration from the heroic saga of the life and struggle of these deathless Indian martyrs of Burma. As one who had the proud privilege of coming into contact with them, even if for a very short period, this short article is offered as a token of homage and everlasting remembrance to their unforgettable memory.

The Struggle for United Front in Kerala

*C. Unni Raja**

With the midterm election in Kerala, held in September 1970, the struggle for building the unity of all left and democratic forces in the country has entered a new phase. In this election, the united front, consisting of the Communist Party of India, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League, formed an electoral alliance with the Congress(R) in the state. This alliance developed into a joint political battle against the parties of right-reaction (supported by a section of the Catholic church heirarchy and communal reactionaries) as well as against the disruptive policies pursued by the left communists, represented by the CPM which had entered into an overt and covert alliance with the former.

The United Front-Congress(R) alliance won 69 out of 133 seats in the State Legislative Assembly and 32 out of 75 lakhs of total polled valid votes The United Front has formed a new government with the active support of the Congress(R) It is generally agreed that the results of the Kerala midterm election would have significant nationwide political impact.

It was in Kerala that in 1957 after the second general

election, the Congress monopoly of power was broken and for the first time a non-Congress left democratic government, led by the Communist Party, was formed. This was hailed at that time by wide sections of democratic opinion in our country and abroad as the most significant development in the political life and democratic movement after independence.

It was again in Kerala that in 1967, during the fourth general election, the then broadest possible united front was forged on the basis of radical democratic programme and the Congress Party and its antipeople policies suffered the biggest defeat.

How was this possible in Kerala? This was possible because the people of Kerala, mainly under the leadership of the Communist Party, had been waging a consistent and prolonged struggle to build the united front of all progressive, democratic and socialist forces in the state. The struggle has a history of at least two decades. The experience gained in this struggle is varied and rich, positive as well as negative. The idea of united front has gone so deep among the people and the balance of political forces is such that every party in the state has been thinking in terms of allying itself with other likeminded forces during the past many years.

Another characteristic feature of this struggle for united front in Kerala is that from the very beginning it has been linked directly with the cardinal question of state power.

Still another feature is that unity among different left and democratic parties and groups has been forged, not merely for the purpose of contesting elections, but such electoral alliances have almost always been preceded by united mass movements and mass struggles

A fourth point to be noted is the fact that the struggle for unity of all left and democratic forces has always been accompanied by a struggle against tendencies to form opportunistic alliances and also against sectarian tendencies to restrict and narrow down the scope of the united front.

Let us examine this experience in some detail.

I

The first general election itself showed that the Congress Party had forfeited the right to rule in the state of Kerala. Then, there was no state of Kerala. There was only the Travancore-Cochin state. North Kerala (Malabar district) was part of the old undivided Madras province. But in Travancore-Cochin state as well as in the Malabar district, the Communist Party took the initiative to unite all non-Congress left and democratic parties on the basis of a common minimum programme.

In Travancore-Cochin the Communist Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party and Kerala Socialist Party together with a number of progressive individuals formed the United Front of Leftists.

In Malabar district, after an intensive mass campaign and prolonged negotiations, the newly-formed Kisan-Mazdoor Praja Party of former Congressmen (which after the first general election merged with the Indian Socialist Party to form the PSP) agreed to have an electoral alliance with the communists and it soon developed into united campaign and joint programmatic alliance.

It is noteworthy that neither in Travancore-Cochin nor in the Malabar district was the ISP leaders prepared to have any alliance or united front with the Communist Party. They were as anticommunist as the Congress Party in power. In Travancore-Cochin the ISP even hoped to form its own government after the election. But the Communist Party and the United Front of Leftists succeeded in having local adjustments with the ISP in certain constituencies in Travancore-Cochin.

The election campaign developed into an unprecedented mass upsurge in support of the United Front of Leftists. In Travancore-Cochin the Communist Party was still under ban. Many of the candidates and most of the leaders were either in jail or underground. The res[illegible] he elect[illegible] that the Congress Party was redu[illegible] inori[illegible] state legislature, though still the [illegible] t p[illegible] United Front of Leftists emerg[illegible] n[illegible] group. Neither the Congress nor th[illegible]

could on its own strength command a majority in the assembly. Thus a period of acute political instability ensued in the Travancore-Cochin state which continued in the Kerala state also after the State's Reorganisation in 1956.

The Congress leadership tried to form an anticommunist antipeople alliance to ensure its monopoly of power. The Communist Party advocated and worked for the broadening of the United Front of Leftists to include all genuine left and democratic elements and groups to replace the Congress by a popular democratic government. Thus the polarisation of political forces that we find now on an all-India scale had already begun in Kerala immediately after the first general election.

The Communist Party said that the unity of all progressive, popular, democratic forces should be forged on the basis of the following three principles *one*, agreement on a common minimum programme of democratic and popular reforms, *two*, agreement to form a non-Congress democratic government to implement the agreed programme, if a majority is won in the legislature, *three*, agreement on organising and leading united mass movements and struggles on the basis of the agreed common programme.

The Communist Party had to wage a continuous ideological and political campaign to get the above principles accepted as a basis for the united front of left and democratic parties and elements. First of all, the very idea of united front was ridiculed, attacked and distorted by the Congress leaders and all reactionary forces—united front was characterised as a "many-legged monstrosity" which was incapable of doing anything; it was attacked as a "trap" set by the Communist Party to attract and swallow all parties and groups that walked into it.

Then, there was a sectarian understanding of the united front among certain left parties like the Kerala Socialist Party and Revolutionary Socialist Party. They were against broadening the base of the united front to include all democratic forces. They wanted a united front of the "working class" (socialists). They openly attacked the communist slogan of "unity of all democratic forces" as revisionism

and a departure from Marxism-Leninism They opposed the continued functioning of the united front committees, formed at the time of the election, at the lower levels on the plea that it would restrict the freedom of activity of the constituent parties At the same time, they wanted the State United Front Committee to function as a super party They insisted on not a *common minimum* programme, but a *maximum* programme.

II

The Communist Party in Kerala combated all such sectarian tendencies to restrict and narrow the scope and to distort the concept of united front At the same time, the party tried to build unity in action of the mass organisations, especially in the trade union movement In the 1954 midterm election in Travancore-Cochin, the United Front of Leftists worked for an electoral alliance with the PSP The PSP leaders were not prepared to commit themselves on a common programme or an alternate government But the balance of political forces in the state at that time was such that only an alliance of the UFL and PSP could decisively defeat the Congress and pave the way for the formation of an alternate non Congress democratic government The people naturally desired such an alliance Hence, the Communist Party advocated such an electoral alliance with PSP without insisting on prior agreement on programme and alternate government The party also gave up some of its sure seats to the PSP for the sake of unity And when the election campaign developed, the PSP leaders themselves had to declare that they were fighting the election together with the UFL, not only just to defeat the Congress, but also to form an alternate government

The UFL-PSP alliance won a clear majority in the assembly But the PSP leadership had no shame or compunction to betray their pledges to the people and form a minority government with the support of the Congress The Congress wanted to prevent the UFL from coming to power and use the PSP as a stepping-stone to reestablish its rule Within ten months the PSP government was overthrown

and the Congress formed its own ministry which also did not last for more than one year

Thus between the first and second general elections three governments were formed and fell in Travancore-Cochin state in the desperate attempts of the reactionary interests to keep the United Front of Leftists out of power During this period the Communist Party and other constituents of the UFL led many big mass actions of the workers and students, agricultural workers and peasants and took the initiative to launch a broad campaign for the formation of Kerala state on the linguistic basis

The united front tactics that the Communist Party followed in the 1954 midterm election were reviewed at the Travancore Cochin state conference of the party held in February 1956 In the report of the State Committee, approved by the conference, it was stated

"How far is the criticism correct that, even though our anxiety to forge a united front was very strong, we did not pay sufficient attention to maintain our independence and to expose the PSP leadership and other left parties and that we made undue concessions to other parties?

Before answering this question, it is necessary to have a correct understanding as to how to maintain the independence of the party inside the united front We did not consider that, either conceding a number of seats to other parties to bring them also into the united front or not always putting forward the name of our party was a mistake We have to prove in action that the Communist Party is most anxious and is prepared to make the maximum sacrifices to forge the united front against Congress, i e to unite the entire people against imperialism and feudalism That is not in any way giving up the independent position of the party, on the other hand, it will only greatly strengthen that position Similarly, it is necessary to expose other parties ideologically and otherwise In the name of united front, if we do not fulfil that task it will be a great danger and mistake But this exposure has got certain methods The same kind of exposure is unsuitable for all occasions When we are working for the aim of uniting all parties during election—when there is very great possibility for such a

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unity—we must criticise other parties in a way helpful to that unity When our efforts for unity are broken, exposure should be of a different nature The ideological struggle in ordinary times will be of a third kind

In the light of the abovementioned principles, we do not consider that the way in which we criticise other parties during the election was wrong or that the independent position of our party was submerged in the united front We conducted exposure and criticism as much as possible, subordinated to the aim of forging unity It was the anti-unity stand of the other parties that had to be criticised most sharply That we did We said that the Congress should be defeated and a coalition government formed on the basis of a clearcut programme and that the PSP leadership should agree to this Not only we said so, but also, we conducted a tremendous mass campaign for this The attitude of the PSP was that unity was necessary, but no need for any programme or prior guarantee that a coalition government would be formed after the election RSP and KSP more or less agreed with this position We strongly opposed it"

The report pinpointed two mistakes our party committed Firstly, Then and afterwards the controversy was centred round the question whether it was correct to have entered into an alliance with the PSP without a written assurance about a coalition government after the election But there was another far more important question—that was whether it was correct to have formed an alliance without any definite programme Today, looking back, we think that the state committee and the Polit Bureau, which was guiding it at that time, took a very opportunistic stand on this question'

Secondly, after the election, during the negotiations for the formation of a coalition government, the Polit Bureau wanted the state committee to insist on certain portfolios (Land Revenue and Labour or Industry) for our party as a precondition for joining the coalition Perhaps we could have prevented the formation of a minority PSP government with the support of the Congress, if we had not insisted on portfolios and instead if we had insisted on and cam-

paigned for a UFL-PSP coalition government based on a common minimum programme.

'Is it not surprising that while we insisted on certain portfolios, we did not at all care for getting a programme accepted? The reason for our adopting such wrong tactics on the question of ministry formation was our wrong understanding about the slogan of government of democratic unity. According to the explanation given by Comrade Ajoy Ghosh at Madurai, we understood the government of democratic unity to contain several aspects of the people's democratic government. People's democratic government is led by the working class. Hence we came to the conclusion that in the government of democratic unity also the Communist Party should have either the leadership or a decisive role. This naturally resulted in our bargaining for more seats in the ministry. This was a wrong understanding. The government that can be formed in the present period through elections will be a democratic coalition government replacing the Congress. Such a government will try to give as much relief to the people as possible under the present constitution, to understand it as a transition to people's democracy or as a government led by the working class will not be correct."

III

It was in this background that the Kerala state came into existence as per the recommendation of the State's Reorganisation Commission on 1 November 1956, just on the eve of the second general election. By that time the UFL in Travancore-Cochin had fallen apart because of the withdrawal of the RSP. And in the Malabar district elections to the district board took place. The PSP leaders refused to have any alliance with the Communist Party. The party together with progressive independents fought the elections and won a majority in the district board and a communist was elected as president of the Malabar District Board.[4]

The struggle for building the unity of all left and democratic forces entered a new phase. It would seem para-

doxical that the Communist Party, which campaigned and fought for a broad anti-Congress democratic front and won significant victories but had to fight the second general election in Kerala singlehanded, won a majority of seats in the state legislature together with a few progressive independents and formed the first communist-led government in India in 1957 in Kerala. Did not this experience negate the concept of the united front? No.

The united front tactics that the Communist Party followed in the second general election in Kerala were as follows:

Even before the Kerala state actually came into existence, the Communist Party, at its state conference in June 1956, placed before the people the slogan of building a new democratic and prosperous Kerala for which the Congress had to be removed from power and the Communist Party, Praja Socialist Party and Revolutionary Socialist Party, together with democratic-minded individuals and such Congressmen who were prepared to oppose the reactionary policies of the Congress must unite on the basis of a common programme, fight the election and reduce the Congress to a minority in the legislature so that conditions were created for the formation of a democratic government The party popularised this slogan extensively among the people Many democrats outside the party welcomed this slogan.

The party was fully conscious of and emphasised the decisive role of the PSP in building the united front of all democratic popular forces In the past, even when the Congress had become a minority, a left democratic government could not be formed in Travancore-Cochin, because of the wrong anticommunist policy of the PSP leadership. The party underlined the danger inherent in such a policy. The stand of the party that an agreed common programme and alternate government should be the basis for unity was widely welcomed by the people But the PSP leaders made it clear that they were not prepared for a united front on the basis of a common programme and formation of an alternate government.

Then, the Communist Party decided that there was no question of any statewide overall united front with the PSP and that the party should go ahead together with others

who were ready to form a united front based on a common programme and alternate government At the same time the party expressed its willingness to have local adjustments with the PSP to reduce the strength of the Congress wherever possible

A section of the Congress leadership tried to form an anticommunist united front consisting of the Congress, Muslim League and the PSP to isolate the Communist Party A section of the PSP leadership carried on negotiations to form a united front with the Muslim League and some others as a third force The Communist Party exposed all such attempts to forge anticommunist reactionary alliances and rallied the people against them

The RSP put forward excessive and unreasonable claims for seats as a condition for joining the united front Naturally, the Communist Party refused to submit to their blackmailing tactics at the same time repeatedly appealing to the PSP and RSP to join with the Communist Party in a united front to defeat the Congress

The result of the united front tactics the Communist Party followed in the 1957 general election in Kerala were summed up as follows by a plenary meeting of the state committee, held in June 1957

In the election we were not able to form a united front But we were able to convince the people at every stage that we sincerely desired unity and worked for it Even when we had to fight the election alone, we declared that, after the election, even if we won a majority, we would seek the help and cooperation of other democratic parties in forming the government It was because of all these things, that we were able to build a broad unity of the people and democrats in general in all the constituencies for the success of the candidates put up or supported by our party

This experience has helped us to get rid of certain mechanical ideas about united front On certain occasions, we may not be able to build unity with other parties It is on the basis of a correct understanding of the experience, the mood and the wishes and desires of the people that we decide the form of united front in each concrete circumstance In the midterm election of 1954 in Travancore-

Cochin we had an electoral understanding with the PSP. They were not prepared to agree on a common programme and an alternate government. In the matter of seats we had to accept some of their unreasonable claims Then it was necessary and correct For the people desired unity at whatever cost to defeat the Congress But in this election, the mood of the people, the objective situation in the country, the balance of strength between different parties—all were quite different Hence we were able to win by adopting different tactics

"But, comrades may think, on the basis of the results of this election, that in future there is no necessity to work for building unity or united front with the PSP, RSP and *other left parties That is wrong To implement our election* programme, at every stage and at every step, the party should consciously work for forging unity with other left parties and with all democratic minded people including Congressmen Only then can we defeat the reactionary policies of the Congress leadership and the machinations of the vested interests ..

'But the Communist Party (together with the independents supported by the party) got only 40 per cent of the total votes polled We should not forget this fact RSP and PSP together got about 14 per cent of the votes In fact, only RSP, PSP and we jointly represent the majority of the people in Kerala Congress got 37 5 per cent of the votes

'Hence we must realise that it is a matter of decisive importance that we must mobilise the people who voted, not only for the Communist Party, but also for other parties, particularly for the parties of democratic opposition, as well as those who voted for the Congress and Muslim League, in mass movements and behind the progressive measures of our ministry In our mass work we must develop such an approach and attitude as to help this process"

Thus the Communist Party in Kerala, at the time of its proud victory, did not forget the supreme need for forging the unity of all democratic forces On the other hand, the party pinpointed the fact that its influence was still very weak among the Muslim and Catholic masses (especially peasantry) and that special attention should be paid to

dispel the deeprooted anticommunism among those masses which was mainly based on religion, in order to develop the democratic movement among those sections of the people also.

IV

I am not going into the achievements of the first popular democratic government that was formed in Kerala under the leadership of the Communist Party. But, during the period when the communist-led government was in power, instead of the Communist Party being able to forge "unity with other left parties and other democratic-minded people including Congressmen" in carrying out obviously popular and democratic measures like the Agrarian Relations Bill, Education Reforms Act, etc, it was the reactionary forces which succeeded in uniting the Congress, PSP and Muslim League, with the covert support of the RSP, to head the socalled "liberation struggle" against the communist-led government. Why? The basic mistake was the sectarian approach to the question of united front which still persisted in the party and in the functioning of the communist-led government. Reviewing the result of the midterm election in 1960, the state council of the party said in its report:

"Our government took several steps and initiated many reforms in the interests of the workers, poor peasants and agricultural workers As a result the influence of the party among them has grown. That was why we received nearly 12 lakhs of votes more.

"Firstly, in the 1957 general election we had won 65 seats on the basis of 40 per cent of votes and formed a government. This reflected a specific balance of forces between political parties and class relations in the state Taking into consideration this balance of forces and the political aims of our party in the present period, we had to consciously and concretely plan how to unite and rally firmly those classes and sections of people which are the allies of the working class and examine each legislative and executive measure of the government from this viewpoint. We did not do this

'Not only workers, poor peasants and agricultural workers, but also considerable sections of middle classes, small industrialists and small landholders and others supported our party in the midterm election, at the same time, our influence was weak among the Muslim and Catholic masses and among urban petty bourgeoisie This was stated in our election review.

"But this fact was not properly taken into consideration in the practical work of the government and the party Hence the legislative and other measures of our government and several activities of our party at all levels tended to create anticommunist prejudices and fears among the Christian masses and to isolate our party from the middle sections and small property owners in the rural areas in certain parts of the state

Secondly, when we became the ruling party, we deviated from the Leninist principle of considering our work in the government as a part of the activity of our party and of the mass organisations under our leadership, to some extent our entire activity began to centre round our work in the legislature and ministry As a result, we neglected the fundamental task of developing the organised strength and conscious activity of the masses the tendency mainly to rely on the government to solve each and every issue that developed inside the party"

The communist led government was dismissed by the central Congress rulers Midterm election took place in the beginning of 1960 in which Communist Party had to face the reactionary anticommunist triple alliance" consisting of the Congress, Muslim League and PSP, backed by vested interests, communal and religious reaction, etc Though the Communist Party polled nearly 12 lakh votes more than in 1957, its representation in the state assembly was reduced to less than half and the 'triple alliance" won an overwhelming majority

But the party was not dismayed by this It said that such a reactionary alliance based on nothing but blind anti-communism could not be stable when the government formed by the 'triple alliance" started to implement anti-

popular measures in the interests of the vested interests, basic contradictions would inevitably develop, not only between the masses who voted for the alliance and the government, but also within the alliance itself; such was the fate of all reactionary antipeople alliances or united fronts.

The Communist Party pointed out that it would be wrong to come to the defeatist conclusion that there was no alternative before the people except to get the government of the "triple alliance" out of power If mass struggles and mass movements were developed, uniting the masses of workers, peasants and other sections of the working people, who voted for and against the communists, to defend their gains won during the communist-led ministry, the government's drive to reverse those gains could be halted; and contradictions would inevitably grow inside the "alliance".

And this proved correct. First the Muslim League left the alliance, then the PSP was elbowed out of the government and a one-party Congress ministry was formed. Finally the Congress itself was split into two and the ministry had to quit. Thus within four years the reactionary "triple alliance" completely disintegrated.

After all this experience, extending over a period of fifteen years—experience of minority Congress governments, PSP government supported by the Congress, communist-led government with a powerful Congress opposition, reactionary "triple alliance" ministry, interspersed with spells of President's Rule—the situation was mature for and the people wanted a real united front government of all left and democratic parties and groups, united on the basis of a programme and enjoying firm and stable majority support of the people inside and outside the legislative assembly.

V

But unfortunately by that time, the Communist Party had split. And the "left" communists, represented by the CPM, not only forgot the experience of building the broad unity of all left and democratic forces, but also repudiated

the basic principles of building that unity in the specific conditions of Kerala.

E M S Namboodiripad, in a pamphlet in Malayalam, explained the understanding of united front of the "left" communists in the following passage

'The task of the working class is to strengthen the struggle against the ruling classes by utilising skilfully the conflicts that are taking place constantly within the ruling classes, the ruling party and the opposition parties (i e according to the Leninist tactics of increasing its own strength, by accepting help from any and everybody, resulting from even the slightest split within the enemy ranks, without dismissing such splits as insignificant) While carrying out this task, we must cooperate with anybody who gives however little help in strengthening the struggle of the workers, peasants and other popular masses, however partial or temporary that help may be But while thus cooperating with others, the fact that the aim of such cooperation is to strengthen the front of class struggle and to smash the front of the ruling classes should never be forgotten " ("Non-Marxist Front—Then and Now" Malayalam, November 1969)

It is obvious that the above explained conception of united front has nothing to do with the Leninist understanding of unity of all left and democratic forces to complete the democratic revolution and go forward to socialist revolution The Leninist strategy of united front is that the working class must unite all classes and sections of people that can be united to carry out successfully a definite stage of revolution In Leninist strategy the problem of united front is a problem of the allies of the working class at different stages of revolution, in different countries and in different historical conditions

In his famous *Two Tactics* Lenin nowhere speaks about "skilfully utilising the conflicts and contradictions in the enemy camp", on the other hand, he discusses the question of the allies of the working class Of course, the working class should make use of all the conflicts and contradictions in the enemy camp in order to strengthen its position and to unite its allies United front is the basic strategy of

uniting all the allies, whereas utilising the conflicts inside the enemy camp is only temporary tactics. And reducing and distorting the concept of united front merely to making use of the conflicts inside the enemy camp in effect means isolating the working class from all its allies.

That was not the understanding of the Communist Party when it advanced the slogan of the unity of all left and democratic forces in Kerala in 1956 and called for the united front of the Communist, Praja Socialist and Revolutionary Socialist parties and also of democratic-minded individuals and such Congressmen who were prepared to fight the antipeople policies of the Congress—a united front based on a democratic programme to defeat the Congress in the election and to create conditions for the formation of a democratic government.

The "left" communists repudiated all this. In the midterm election in Kerala, which took place in March 1965, within a year after the split in the Communist Party, they wanted only opportunistic electoral alliances with all and sundry without any common programme, without any commitment on forming an alternative government after the election. On this question they broke up the united front with the Communist Party and RSP and slandered them as "agents of the Congress". They entered into open and secret electoral adjustments with the SSP and Muslim League.

The results were disastrous to the people and democratic movement in Kerala. Of course, the two factions of the Congress lost heavily; the CPM emerged as the largest single party. It succeeded in temporarily isolating and defeating the Communist Party. But the "left" communists had destroyed any possibility of forming a non-Congress democratic government. So President's Rule continued.

In such a situation it was the Communist Party which took the initiative to revive the mass movement and the united front of all non-Congress democratic forces for the immediate political and economic demands of the people of Kerala. A "Joint Action Committee" was formed consisting of representatives of all left parties, into this JAC were drawn the representatives of the Kerala Socialist Party and "Peasants and Workers Party" (KTP), formed out of

the former anticommunist front in addition to the two communist parties, RSP and SSP. As the mass movements and mass struggles developed under the leadership of the Joint Action Committee, culminating in the glorious Kerala Bandh of 28 January 1966 (which was supported even by the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee), the Muslim League also was drawn into the united front. The leadership of the Muslim League openly declared that it was prepared to unite with the communists on the basis of a common programme for the purpose of defeating the Congress in the ensuing fourth general election and forming a non-Congress democratic government.

This was a significant victory for the line of united front advocated all along by our party. The entry of the Muslim League into a united front with the communists also signified that the vast masses of Muslim peasantry, who were till now kept away from the general stream of democratic movement, were also drawn into it. This was made possible due to various reasons: (1) their own experience with the Congress governments; (2) the radicalisation among the Muslim masses as a result of the mass movements and mass struggles, (3) the continuous and patient political propaganda, conducted mainly by the Communist Party.

Thus the seven-party united front was formed out of joint mass struggles and mass movements. It adopted its common election programme in September 1966—a programme of urgently-needed minimum democratic changes, including radical land reforms and relief measures for the working people.

As is well known the united front won an unprecedentedly overwhelming victory in the 1967 general election. The enthusiasm and activity of the people for the victory of the candidates of the united front was tremendous. The Indian National Congress and the breakaway Kerala Congress were reduced to an insignificant minority winning only 9 and 5 seats respectively.

VI

In the united front, the "left" communists were the dominant party. A united front ministry, headed by CPM leader

Namboodiripad, was formed. A ministry with such an overwhelming majority inside the assembly and such a massive popular support outside would be expected to be stable and go ahead with determination and urgency to implement the major provisions of the united front programme But the wrong and sectarian understanding of the CPM with regard to the united front and united front government began to act as a big drag.

Let me quote again from the abovementioned pamphlet of E. M. S Namboodiripad·

"The party congress held in 1964 and the Central Committee meeting held in April 1967 were able to evolve quite a realistic and revolutionary approach to what can be and cannot be accomplished by the non-Congress governments formed in 1967. As a result of the crisis among the ruling classes, it may be possible to form, together with certain sections of the ruling classes, governments which can give temporary and partial relief to the people; this possibility should be used to the maximum, but the character of the state and of the non-Congress front being formed does not give scope for too much hope. Therefore, while doing the maximum possible and organising mass struggles to remove the obstacles that may arise even to do that and thus utilising such governments, we must convince the people the need for replacing the present state in its entirety by a new state (of people's democracy), must give priority to organisational work for preparing the people for revolutionary struggle to effect that change; must make use of the non-Congress governments as instruments to achieve that aim—it is this Leninist approach that is there in the party programme and the Central Committee resolution" (*Ibid*, pp. 77-78)

I do not know from where Namboodiripad got this so-called "Leninist" approach. You cannot find any such thing either in Lenin's works or in the resolutions and theses of the Comintern which carried forward, elaborated and concretised the Leninist understanding of the united front and united front governments

Certain things in the above formulation are specially noteworthy: (1) The "left" communists do not consider the

non-Congress governments, even in Kerala and West Bengal, where the CPM has a dominant position, as governments of left and democratic unity or even as united front governments They are merely non Congress governments, (2) they consider the constituents of the united front such as the Communist Party or RSP or SSP as representatives of 'certain sections of the ruling classes", (3) they minimise the role of the united front governments, in the present Indian situation, to give relief to the people and to effect certain very important democratic structural changes (especially in land relations) to such an extent that it is tantamount to a denial of any such role, and (4) they find the utility of these governments mainly as instruments in the organisational (not political) preparation of the masses for revolutionary struggles to establish "people's democracy"

This wrong understanding in practice meant in Kerala *Firstly*, *the CPM leaders did not consider the united front or its government as consisting of equal and independent* constituents They wanted everybody else to toe their line If other parties disagreed or expressed independent opinions, they are slandered as "agents of the Congress" or as "saboteurs of the united front" conspiring to isolate the 'left' communists In the State Coordination Committee the CPM representatives took an attitude of "either accept what we say or we will not carry out whatever you may decide" They wanted to establish their one party domination in the united front and its government

Secondly the CPM leaders paid scant respect to the united front programme In the name of constitution, courts and central government, they refused to implement or evaded implementation of any of the major items in the united front programme On the other hand, they harped on struggle against the centre which could not but remain an empty phrase *because the people could be rallied in a struggle against the centre only if concrete issues of conflict* arose in the course of implementing the united front programme

Thirdly the CPM leaders openly and unashamedly *used* the governmental machinery *for "strengthening" their party* which naturally led *to largescale and widespread corruption*

at all levels. The labour department was used to split the trade unions. Only such struggles of the workers and peasants were supported as were led by the CPM. They used the police also in a partisan way.

Naturally the people began to get disillusioned. Their high hopes in the united front were dashed to the ground. The very idea and image of the united front got tarnished and discredited; conflicts and contradictions began to develop inside the united front itself. The Communist Party had to carry on a consistent ideological and political struggle against this wrong, sectarian and disruptive attitude and activities of the "left" communists. That was necessary to save the united front and safeguard the interests of the people of Kerala. The Communist Party conducted this struggle inside the Coordination Committee and also among the people whenever it became necessary.

The Communist Party sought to maintain the equality and independence of each constituent of the united front. It insisted upon implementation of the united front programme according to the unanimous decisions of the Coordination Committee. It did not want the Coordination Committee to be a pocket organisation of the CPM. The Communist Party advocated formation of united front committees at all levels so as to avoid friction between various constituent parties and to conduct joint campaigns and struggles. It wanted and campaigned for speedy legislation on land reforms. It fought against corruption and nepotism of the CPM which had become an open scandal.

The result of this consistent struggle was that the "left" communists were isolated in the united front. And in order to escape from the isolation, the CPM leadership decided to scuttle the united front government and to destroy the united front.

The Communist Party was able, despite the opposition of the CPM, to regroup the united front on a broader basis and form a new united front government. And the change was immediately apparent to all.

There was no one-party domination. The Coordination Committee started functioning as a real coordination committee with equal rights for all the constituent parties.

Representatives of all the constituent parties were appointed as joint conveners. Regular meetings began to be held and unanimous decisions taken on all major policy questions. United front committees were formed at district and constituency levels. The cabinet also functioned strictly observing the principle of collective responsibility.

Not only in the matter of mutual relationship and functioning of the united front, but also in the life of the people, especially of the vast masses of peasants, agricultural and industrial workers, the change was felt immediately; for, the new government lost no time to start implementing some of the major items of the united front programme thus debunking the claim and excuse of the "left" communists that nothing much can be done under the present conditions by a state government.

The beginning of implementation of the Land Reforms Act was the greatest achievement of the new united front in Kerala. As a result of it, landlord-tenant relations have been totally abolished in the state. From 1 January 1970 no tenant is obliged to pay any rent to the landlord and nobody can lease out his land on rent. An effective ceiling has been imposed on landholdings and there will be no landholder possessing more than 20 acres of land. Together with the many lakhs of homestead-dwellers getting ownership of their homesteads (3 to 10 cents), distribution of cultivable wasteland to agricultural workers and poor peasants and conferment of permanent ownership rights on all those landless and poor cultivators who had occupied government land, the Land Reforms Act totally changes the entire system of agrarian relations in Kerala in the interests of the mass of peasantry.

VII

The breaking up of the united front in Kerala by the CPM leadership and the formation of a new united front on the initiative of the CPI took place at a time when the entire political situation in India was fast changing. The Congress Party was on the verge of split due to mainly sharp policy conflicts. The Congress Party in Kerala had extended its support to the new united front government

for the implementation of the Land Reforms Act and other progressive measures After the split in the Congress, this support was further strengthened and paved the way for the alliance between the United Front and Congress (R), based on almost identical programmes of rapid implementation of Land Reforms Act, a vigorous programme of industrialisation, effective measures to ease the acute problem of unemployment, etc in the midterm election

As far as Kerala is concerned, the split in the Congress Party meant that new possibilities have opened to extend the united front of democratic and socialist forces to include the Congress (R) also, because of the strength of the left movement as well as the composition of Congress (R) in the state It is significant that the students and youth who form a major radical organised section inside the Congress (R) in Kerala played a very important role in forging the alliance between Congress (R) and the United Front

If the CPM leadership had cared to objectively and concretely analyse and understand the meaning of the split in the Congress Party from the standpoint of the working class and adopted a correct policy of uniting all left and democratic forces, it would have been possible to broaden the seven-party United Front to Congress (R) also on a principled basis That would have given the biggest blow to right-reaction, not only in Kerala, but also on a national political plane

On the other hand, what the 'left" communist leaders did was to pursue a policy of disrupting the united front by their 'self-satisfied sectarianism" which "*more than any thing else* impedes our struggle for the realisation of the united front" (G Dimitrov in his report to the 7th Congress of the Comintern) The attitude and approach of the CPM is not something new in Kerala During the past, other left parties like the P(S)SP (not the present PSP unit in Kerala —C U R) and KSP had pursued the same policy of disruption, thus preventing the unity of all left and democratic forces and indirectly and sometimes directly helping the reactionary forces Such a policy naturally has led the CPM to the camp of right reaction as in the recent midterm election

Book Review

Batuk Vora

Eros and Civilisation, by Herbert Marcuse, Sphere Books Ltd., 40 Park Street, London, W.1., Price 7s 6d, pp. 219.

Civilisation is based *on the permanent "repression"* of human instincts. The methodical "sacrifice" of libido is culture. "Free gratification" of man's instinctual needs is *incompatible with civilised society. History of man is history* of his repression. The vicissitudes of instincts are the vicissitudes of mental apparatus in civilisation...

The "claims of the pleasure principle", though mastered and repressed by civilisation, continue to exist in the unconscious. The *return of the repressed* makes up the tabooed and subterranean history of civilisation. So repression becomes a "historical phenomenon".

The "fact" that the "reality principle" has to be reestablished continually in the development of man indicates that *its triumph over the "pleasure principle" is never complete* and never secure. The primal father as the "archetype of domination" initiates the chain reaction of enslavement, *rebellion and reinforced domination* which marks the history of civilisation

All this is the language of Sigmund Freud But Herbert Marcuse asserts in this book that Freud s individual psychology in its very essence is a social psychology"

After basically taking Freud s individualistic instinctual structure for granted, the author here proceeds to contribute to the "philosophy of psychoanalysis , not to psychoanalysis itself He tries to move exclusively in the field of theory The author's concern is not with the different interpretations of Freudian concepts, but with their "philosophical and sociological implications", accepting Freud's theory of man as such That means the Marxian concept that man is a social being has been ignored It is known that Freud s concept of the inborn or the phylogenetic elements in mental activity follows the traditional and popular notion of quasimental instincts For him 'instincts" are moving mysteriously in the realm of speculation They do not represent total personality of an individual

So Marcuse has tried to examine Freud's 'repressive mental apparatus" on two levels ontogenetic and phylogenetic The former is growth of the repressed individual' from the primal horde to the fully constituted civilised state It is at least implied here that both are interrelated

The "pleasure principle" and 'reality principle" are eternally antagonistic according to Freud The notion that non-repressive civilisation is impossible is cornerstone of Freudian theory But the author here asserts that Freudian theory contains elements that break through this rationalisation, 'there is an ever renewed connection between civilisation and barbarism, progress and suffering, a connection that ultimately reveals itself as that between Eros and Thanatos"

Actually, the Freudian terms do not differentiate between the biological and socio historical vicissitudes of the instincts Freud traced the developments of repression in the instinctual structure of the individual *That the human consciousness is derivatory from matter had not been accepted by Freud*

Also the metaphysical and mechanical conceptions of 'inborn instincts" supposed to be preserving their primitive state intact under the socalled repressive overlayer of civilised habits" were already challenged by Freud's con-

temporary Pavlov, the Russian scientist, during his experiments on the nervous system conducted in the laboratory

While Pavlov sought solution to complicated mental processes in the functioning of the upper regions of the nervous system, Freud on the contrary pursued the same objective within the limit of the mind itself, without regard to knowledge of the brain as the organ of the mental life

Marcuse has not taken into account the fact that Freud's was the psychology of the unconscious The unconscious in effect was Freud s substitute for the cerebral nervous system There being yet no physiological knowledge of the latter in his time, he proceeded to pack the substitute with all sorts of imaginary and speculative propositions to construct his theory of psychoanalysis

Missing or ignoring this very fundamental thing Marcuse goes on to construct some additional formulations devoting the specific socio historic components, connecting Freud's instinctual structure with the historical forms of societies New terms introduced by Marcuse are

(a) *Surplus Repression* This is distinguished from basic repression, it is only "modifications" of instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in different types of civilisation

(b) *Performance Principle* It is the prevailing historical form of the "reality principle" as expounded by Freud

The argument that pleasure principle" is incompatible with reality, that only pain and misery prevail over man when he is working or toiling, that "basic instincts' (sex and death) strive to prevail over man at each moment of his existence, is looming large in all Freud's works

Marcuse has of course not accepted such conception but only 'so far as it applies to the brute fact of scarcity what actually is the consequence of a specific organisation of scarcity" Here he says that prevailing scarcity of means has not been distributed collectively in accordance with individual needs That means, Freud's idea of 'basic instincts striving to dominate man" has not been basically challenged

So what Marcuse has done here is to add various 'modes of domination" resulting in various historical stages of

reality as against Freud's flat "reality principle" that represses basic human instincts in all times.

For example, Marcuse says that a society in which all members normally work for a living requires "other modes of repression" than a society in which labour is the exclusive province of one specific group. That is, the "repression" will be there even in a classless society. Marcuse has not bothered to analyse the very concept of repression of socalled instincts.

So the theory of socalled "reality principle" ruling over the "pleasure principle" has been basically accepted. Freud was never so cleverly defended. What Freud termed as repression could be called sublimation of instincts. But Marcuse does not say so.

Marcuse has made the concept of "repression" into a qualified one. On socio-historical level, "every revolution has also been a betrayed revolution—because may it be a slave revolt or a socialist revolution but an element of *self-defeat* seems to have been involved in the dynamic that every time those who have striven for the abolition of domination and exploitation have been defeated". Pretty pessimistic picture, indeed!

While Freud lays down "domination-rebellion-domination" theory, Marcuse says that the second domination is not simply a repetition of the first one, the cyclical movement is progress in domination. Even a socialist revolution cannot do away with this!

But one would ask where then is freedom to be found? Is there not any scope for freedom from the "cycle of subordination and repression"?

Freud visualised it only in the "liberation of basic instincts" from inhibitions imposed by civilisation. While Marcuse here builds up a "new reality principle".

This could be done "by achieving a new starting point where man could reconstruct the productive apparatus without that 'innerworldly asceticism' which provided the mental basis for domination..."

The idea of such a new reality principle is based on the assumption that material preconditions for its development are established in the advanced industrial societies. Marcuse

adds here his theory, later on developed by him in *One Dimensional Man*, that the "very scope and effectiveness of the democratic introjection have suppressed the historical subject, the agent of revolution free people are not in need of liberation, and the oppressed are not strong enough (those in backward countries) to liberate themselves '

So the author goes on to redefine the concept of utopia Liberation is the most realistic, the most concrete of all historical possibilities and at the same time the most rationally and effectively repressed—the most abstract and remote possibility

When in affluent societies, productivity has reached a level at which the masses participate in its benefits and at which the opposition is democratically 'contained then the conflict between master and slave is also effectively controlled, or rather it has changed its social location'

And as if giving a concession to Marx, Marcuse writes that 'Marxian concept regains its full validity in the international arena Marxian concept stipulated that only those who were free from the blessings of capitalism (backward countries) could possibly change it into a free society those whose existence was the very negation of capitalist property could become the historical agents of liberation

'The historical advantage of the late comer, of technical backwardness, may be that of skipping the stage of the affluent society By the poverty and weakness they may be forced to forgo the aggressive and wasteful use of science and technology

For the overdeveloped countries this chance would be tantamount to the abolition of the conditions under which man's labour perpetuates as self propelling power, his subordination to the productive apparatus, and, with it, the obsolete forms of the struggle for existence

In advanced countries like the USA he says, antiwar protest is a fight for Eros against Death— today fight for Eros is the political fight" He refers to sex revolt by hippies and 'in' crowd and says there is biological necessity behind this This is so because other opposition is democratically contained So there is no other fight but the fight for Eros and biological needs that is possible in overdeveloped coun-

tries! Agents of liberation will be only those poor in the backward countries. It is only short of saying there is no need of any revolution in the advanced countries! Only need there is just to abolish overdevelopment and wasteful use of technology.

Marcuse says this in the political preface written in 1966 to the book Actually it has no immediate relevance with theoretical aspects of Freudian psychoanalysis with which the book is concerned.

But even then one may see how upside down he has tried to use Marx. Marx on the contrary visualised revolutions in the developed countries. Marx or Lenin never built any utopia for the exploited people of developed countries

At another place Marcuse defends Freud rather too crudely. Discussing the post-Freudian "revisionist" theories which insist that society is not a static set of laws instituted in the past at the time of the murder of the primal father, but rather a growing, changing, developing network of interpersonal experiences and behaviour (Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, etc.), Marcuse upholds Freudian concept. Freud saw society as "static" and thought that society developed as a mechanism for controlling man's instincts.

Behind all the differences among the historical forms of society, Freud saw the basic "inhumanity" common to all of them. Marcuse says that by virtue of this "insight" of Freud, "his static concept of society is closer to truth than the dynamic sociological concepts supplied by revisionists".

This, in fact, was the most absurd basis of Freud's metapsychology. Fromm and others might be wrong in their nature of approach to the subject but Freud's concept of static nature of society can stand no scrutiny at all.

The last pages of book are revealing so far as they bring out clearly where the author stands. All the radical postures stand exposed when the author comes in strong defence of Freud. Herein also lies his unwritten defence of Freudian concepts of "mysterious" instincts which move in the realm of speculation. Freud had also said that the price of civilisation was neurosis! In that sense everybody is more or less neurotic. Are we to believe this also? The book has no answer.